

AIN SLEES

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS



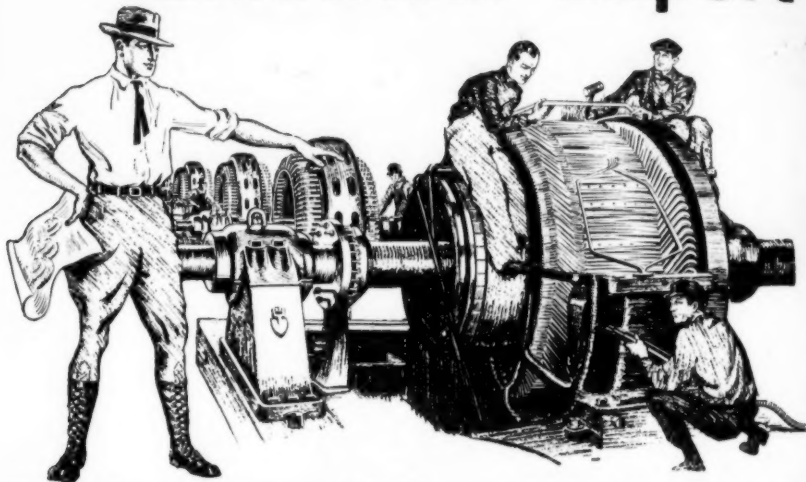
Robert Hichens
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COVER DESIGN
BY E. L. CROMPTON

Dorothy Parker
Hugh MacNair Kahler

Beginning *Berta Ruck's New Novel*
"The August Day"

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732 Oliver Typewriter Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

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Occupation or Business.....

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Vol. XLVI

FEBRUARY, 1921

No. 6

AINSLIE'S

The Magazine That Entertains

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The Façade

By Robert Hichens

Author of "The Garden of Allah,"
"Barbary Sheep," etc.



CHAPTER I.

WHEN I met Ariadne Marshall for the first time she was, I suppose, almost at the height of that peculiar career which had made her notorious. Every one in London who knew of anything—there are, of course, millions who don't—knew of her. She represented intellect upon the stage. She was renowned for plastic grace. Her taste in costume was considered extraordinary. She followed no fashions. She was above that sort of thing. Besides her beauty—if, indeed, it were beauty—was too peculiar to be pulled about by the dressmakers, the modistes, the hair specialists. It demanded a very special treatment. Some said it was Byzantine; others thought it early Egyptian. Anyhow, it would have been ruined by "bobbed" hair and devastated by a short skirt, a fish tail, a jumper, or a "tailor-made." As to hats, well, Ariadne designed her own hats, with the help, it was sometimes said, of Cambridge professors.

Ariadne knew a large selection of professors. All the intellectual men who had never heard of Delysia, who

didn't know that London contained a theater named the Gaiety, were to be seen at her first nights and frequented her small, paneled house in Marmion Street, Westminster, a house of austere aspect and frugal charm, with a minimum of furniture, but containing some priceless "bits," a collection of jade and another of amber, which caught the sunlight—when there was any—and one, only one, picture, which was said to be a Leonardo da Vinci. Who said so, I can't remember at the moment. But I believe it was a Portuguese expert who lived in Corfu and who was considered by a small clique of the elect to know more about Leonardo than any other human being, either in Corfu or out of it.

In this small and delicately mysterious house, with its black-and-purple dining room, upstairs, its misty, blue-and-green drawing-room, downstairs, its long, orange-colored bedroom without any bed—Ariadne slept on a divan raised about half a foot from the floor—and its tiny garden—"the hanging garden of Westminster," Ariadne's circle called it—on the leads, Ariadne

dwelt alone, like a chaste priestess, ministered to by some two or three respectable women, dressed in plum color and with reassuring Scotch accents.

Ariadne was a widow, and had been a widow for a very long time, though she was only in the beginning of the thirties. She had been married very young, she said, long before she knew what she really was. To whom? Nobody seemed quite to know. But it was understood that the husband had been that most dreadful of all created beings, a Philistine. If any question were asked about him such as, "What did he do?" the answer would be, "She never says, but—he was a Philistine." Or, "Did he understand her? Was he unkind to her?" "She never accuses him of anything, but—he was a Philistine." Long ago, it was whispered, before Ariadne had ever thought of going upon the stage, the grave most fortunately had closed over him, and now he slept with his fathers in Philistia. Even his name was unknown to Ariadne's circle. It had not been Marshall. That much was certain! Johnnie Dean, devoted adherent of Ariadne's, always spoke of the deceased as, "That man whose name wasn't Marshall." For the rest, Ariadne had a right to her secret. She had married a Philistine and had emerged into which she was, untouched, untainted, with no mire of Philistinism clinging to the skirts of her garments. Her marriage must have been a great melodrama, one of those melodramas which one doesn't care to think about, but the curtain had long since been rung down upon it. And Ariadne was what she was.

Ariadne—I am speaking of the time when I first got to know her—was "in management;" that is, she had power over a building fitted up as a theater and called the Parthenon Theater, which was frequented by the elect of London, Oxford, Cambridge, and other centers of taste and intellect. Over the

portico of this temple of art was the name "Ariadne Marshall," which at night was illuminated with dull-red light. On the program was the announcement, "Sole Lessee and Manager, Ariadne Marshall." And, whatever play was being given, one read the statement, "The play produced by Ariadne Marshall," and lower down, "The costumes designed by Ariadne Marshall."

There was no doubt, therefore, as to who had power over the Parthenon Theater. As Johnnie Dean said, "Ariadne is the theater, and the theater is Ariadne." And this declaration evidently covered the whole matter.

The Parthenon Theater was in a by-street—that coarse-tongued fellow, Sam Hartlebury, in consequence, always spoke of Ariadne as "the widow in the by-street"—but quite near to the center of things, and, at the time I am dealing with, was enjoying a nice, little, intellectual success with a play by Ezra Green called "Realistic and Idealistic Love," in which Ariadne was never off the boards. She was alone there when the curtain went up, and alone there when the curtain came down, both times in the center of the clever little stage which was copied from one in Moscow. The play was still running to quite fair houses, but Ariadne would be wanting a new piece soon, and Professor Simeon Jenkins hadn't yet finished the translation he was making from the Dutch for Ariadne. Therefore, she had to look about for something suitable. Now, I had just written something. The question was, whether it was suitable. Only Ariadne could decide that. We didn't know each other. But an introduction was "brought about" by Johnnie Dean. And that was how and why I came to know Ariadne.

Johnnie Dean took me to Marmion Street on a Sunday afternoon about three o'clock at Ariadne's special re-

quest, and I brought the play I had written with me.

"She'll judge it at a first reading," said Johnnie with a wise smile. "Ariadne's extraordinarily swift. No hesitations, no shilly-shally. Her intellect goes straight to the point."

"That's more than one can say of most actresses," I remarked, trying to cover uneasiness with cynicism.

"Oh, Ariadne's much more than a mere actress. She's a highly intellectual woman with a marvelous sense of art. Here we are!"

The front door was black with a silver knocker, the head of a dryad. There was no letter box.

"The postman has to ring and give the letters in," observed Johnnie gravely.

"Dear me!" I remarked impotently.

A Scotchwoman in plum color opened the door.

"The drawing-room's downstairs," said Johnnie.

"Dear me!" I again said, laying my hat down on a black marriage chest which stood in the minute, square hall.

"And the dining room's on the first floor."

"Dear——"

But at this moment Ariadne was disclosed by the Scotchwoman, who had opened the drawing-room door, and my remark was truncated.

Ariadne was standing erect by a tall chimney piece of carved wood, with panels and thin, fluted columns. A wood fire was burning behind her. She looked very tall against that background of flames. She wore a black-velvet dress with very long, tight sleeves, and in her red-brown hair, which completely covered her ears, and which appeared to me amazingly thick and mysterious, there was fastened a large and learned-looking red jewel in an extraordinary setting of gold. I felt at once that it had been dug up out of a tomb by an Egyptologist who was a friend of Ari-

adne's. Her irregular features—she has, or had, a rather pointed nose with arched nostrils, a wide, full-lipped mouth, a small, round chin, and narrow, green eyes slanting downward under thin, slanting eyebrows—were set in a serious, carved expression, like that of a muse thinking deeply and tranquilly. In her right hand, on which was one extraordinary ring which, I felt sure, also came from a tomb, was a book bound in some dull brocade with gold clasps, a Greek testament with a "crib," as I found out later. Near to her, sitting in a misty-blue armchair, was a little, old man, dry as a Saharan lizard, with expressionless, blue eyes, a mouth like a purse with no money in it, and bright-pink hands.

As Johnnie introduced me to Ariadne, she gazed at me steadily, not piercingly, but with strong earnestness, and shook my hand with a sort of calm authority, after laying her book aside on a small, antique table which looked as if it had come out of the vestry of some ancient church. Then she introduced me to the little, old man; Mr. Murryan was his impressive name. I thought it sounded like the name of a pestilence. I bowed, wondering why he was there and whether he was going to stay, and Mr. Murryan nodded, suddenly caught hold of his nose, seemed to ring it, turned in his very long feet, which had previously been arranged in what used to be called "the first position."

"Have you brought the play?" asked Ariadne in a deep and sonorous voice, still looking earnestly at me with the carved expression.

I said yes.

"Well, then, thank you, John."

And to my surprise, Johnnie evaporated while Mr. Murryan remained.

"A Murryan upon him!" I remember saying to myself.

When Johnnie was gone, Ariadne took a long, deep-blue taper from a sil-

ver casket which stood alone—no doubt it was priceless—on a bracket under the supposed Leonardo, a long-faced woman either smiling or not smiling—one couldn't tell which—and lit three candles of deep-blue wax.

"Please sit in this chair," she said, pointing to a high chair just in front of them; "I shall give you all my attention."

I glanced at Mr. Murryan, who was pulling one of his exceptionally large ears with his brilliant-pink fingers. Who was he? I couldn't divine. Anyhow, he was there. Then I sat down and took hold of my play. As I did so, Ariadne sank upon a very low, cushioned settee near the fire, clasped her hands around her knees, and gazed into my face with an unwinking fixity which was almost, not quite, Oriental.

"The Parthenon Theater!" I thought. "And she is as still as the Parthenon on a height, too. For she must be tremendously intellectual."

As I began to read, it seemed to me this play of mine was great rubbish.

That impression of my work deepened in me while I read the three acts. As I finished each, I paused for a moment and looked first at Ariadne, then at Mr. Murryan. The latter seemed to be wrapped in a deep and trancelike sleep, for his eyes were shut and no breathing was audible. The former was evidently wrapped in high thought and profound contemplation. For she never moved and never took her eyes from my face. There was something tremendously impressive in her intense concentration on the matter in hand. She seemed literally to loom over me and my play. And again I was reminded of a temple set on a height.

At last I had read the final word, and I crumpled the manuscript in a pair of decidedly nervous hands. Silence.

"That's all!" I said.

I corrected myself quickly:

"That is all."

Mr. Murryan got up, rang his nose, and slipped out of the room, like a lizard slipping over sand, I thought.

I was alone with Ariadne.

When the door was shut on her enigmatic friend, I thought she would speak. But she didn't. She sat still, wrapped in thought. Evidently she was mentally summing up my play, preparatory to delivering a verdict. I imagined her powerful mind busily and relentlessly at work, its brilliant operations masked by the mysterious, physical frontage presented to my view.

"Well," I said, at length, feeling that some one must speak. "Well, Miss Marshall, what do you think of the play?"

"I've taken it all in," she said calmly.

"I realize that fully."

"We won't talk about it."

"What?" I exclaimed, surprised, even taken aback. "You think it as hopeless as that?"

"To-morrow morning you will know what I think. To-morrow morning, perhaps by the second post, you will receive a letter from me going thoroughly into your work. I shall write it to-night, when the house is quiet. The brain, I find, works best at night, when ordinary folk"—she allowed herself a faint and compassionate smile—"are sleeping."

She paused for a moment. Then she got up slowly, plastically, stretched out her fine arms, touched her voluminous hair gently, and said:

"Now shall I show you my few treasures? That is a Leonardo."

And we went to look at the picture.

I thought it had something of Ariadne's mysterious grace and poise.

CHAPTER II.

On the following morning, by the second post, I received a large, square, and evidently well-filled envelope, butcher blue in color, and directed to me in the small, clear writing which is

characteristic of Oxford and Cambridge. The address, indeed, looked as if it had been written by a don. I opened the envelope eagerly and took out a long letter, which began:

DEAR MAN:

I was already, I confess it, much impressed by Ariadne's remarkable personality; but when I had finished reading her letter, I suppose I felt about her much as Johnnie Dean did. For the butcher-blue pages set forth a minute, powerful, logical, and deeply subtle criticism of my play. Ariadne wrote:

As it is, it won't do. The psychology is in places, too cloudy, sometimes even contradictory, the contradictions unintentional on your part, of course. Let me point out precisely what I mean.

And she pointed it out with really remarkable perspicacity. I saw my play with new eyes, hers; judged it with a new brain, again hers. Of course, it wouldn't do as it was. The only marvel to me was that I hadn't seen that before. Ariadne had opened my peepers with a vengeance!

At last I laid the letter down and looked, stared, at the last words, as the blue paper reposed on my writing table:

But don't be discouraged, dear man. I am sure you can get it right. What it needs is more *thought*, more fundamental, brain work. Give it that—how few folk ever give that to anything—and it may yet be possible to produce it in the Parthenon Theater. I daresay any other manager in London would be satisfied with it as it is now. But that is not my case.

ARIADNE MARSHALL.

Fundamental brain work! There wrote, no doubt, the true Ariadne. In thinking over the many actresses I knew—and I knew, oh, so many—I could not come upon her peer. People of the stage hitherto had always seemed to me extraordinarily haphazard in their mental processes. They were, many of them, gifted, no doubt; but they seemed to rely on their gifts, rather, as a bird relies on its wings,

without thought. They chanced their flights. Ariadne was more like a powerful airplane than a bird. But she was the skilled mechanic, too, and the pilot and the observer. A most remarkable woman, a woman with brains!

After smoking a pipe, I telegraphed, answer paid, to Ariadne:

May I come to you and discuss the play?

Within a short time I received this reply:

I never discuss plays. My business is to judge the finished work. Gretings.

ARIADNE MARSHALL.

I was deeply impressed by this telegram. In a way it disappointed me. Yet it was admirably to the point. It is for the author to do, for the actress-manageress to judge of what he has done. Discussion is a sort of collaboration. I felt rather humiliated by being thus set right. But Ariadne had gone to the core of the matter.

Fundamental brainwork! That was the thing. The worst of it was that I felt rather like a reluctant day laborer who, in a warm feather bed, hears the first strident notes of intolerable chan-ticleer.

That evening I bought a stall for the performance at the Parthenon Theater.

Now, as every one knows—except those who know nothing—the Parthenon Theater has a majestic façade which gives nobility, almost, to the by-street in which it unsuitably stands. The façade is like a Greek temple. But, when you get inside, the theater is surprisingly small—indeed, almost poky—with narrow corridors, a rather mean staircase, and a very poor foyer. Unless the play being done requires incidental music, there is no orchestra. The lighting of the stage is perfect. But the lighting of the theater, though adequate, is not brilliant. The decoration is good, but very simple, almost austere. The stalls and dress-circle seats are upholstered in black with dull gold,

sparingly used. There is no pit. The walls are paneled in dark wood. The curtains which hide the stage are of a dim, purple hue. I need not say that no plush is to be found in the theater. Ariadne would as soon connect herself with plush as with "The Soul's Awakening" in painting, "the Rosary" in literature, or "The End of a Perfect Day" in music.

There was a fair, though not crowded, audience that night, and I was very much struck by its appearance. It was not an ordinary audience. There was something earnest, almost reverential, suggesting clasped hands and up-raised eyes, about it. As I glanced at the rather dowdily clad men, many of them young with students' eyes and locks, at the women with Greek fillets in their hair and deep-hued, though not strictly modish robes, I muttered to myself, "Fundamental brainwork!" This was not a common or garden theater for light-hearted fools. This was a place of aspiration, of intellect, a place where you could put your teeth into something which might be gritty, but which would certainly prove to be substantial.

What would my play be here? Not up to the mark, I said to myself; not up to the mark, at all!

"Realistic and Idealistic Love" was enormously intellectual, and Ariadne's performance in the chief part was enormously intellectual, too. At least, I thought so. One did not feel a woman's heart beating in it so much as a man's brain working in it. And yet the attitudes, the poses, were almost voluptuous at times, but with a sort of classical and statuesque voluptuousness. I remember, in one scene Ariadne opened a door, and I felt that it gave upon something tremendous—the desert, perhaps, or the interior of an academy for the study of occult sciences. In another scene she shut it, and I felt that she was shutting out immensities.

She was calm in the part, quite passionless; but this absence of passion was striking. She looked wonderful, as wonderful as the façade of her theater.

During the entr'actes few people went out to the bars—if there were bars. They sat still and talked earnestly in subdued voices. I heard such expressions as, "food for the mind," "full of gray matter," "the inner workings of a restless, but controlled intellect," "a grand exhibition of the serpentine convolutions of that marvelous piece of mechanism, the modern brain."

Yes, there was fundamental brainwork here.

At the close of the performance, an attendant came up to me and said, "Are you Mr. So-and-so?" I said I was. "Then will you kindly come to see Miss Marshall?"

I followed the woman through a doorway, and was shown into a long, narrow room, sparsely furnished and lined with books, where I found Ariadne, in her stage dress, lying on a divan almost level with the floor. In a corner of the room was a young man with a white, round face, a high, round, and protuberant forehead, and large, sunken, brown eyes, who was holding in both hands a small statuette of Circe. Ariadne introduced him as Mr. Leo Fanning. He bowed, but said nothing.

"Sit down, dear man!" Ariadne added, slightly moving her feet.

I sat down on the end of the divan, with my knees nearly touching my chin.

"So you saw me!" I said.

She shook her head compassionately.

"I never see any one when I am acting. How could you suppose so? The artist who sees the audience can never hope to accomplish anything. No. The man at the box office recognized you and told me you were here. You read my letter carefully?"

"I did indeed."

"You took it to heart and brain?"

"Certainly I did."

"You realize now what I need to work upon? Brains there must be in any play I produce, a high intellectual standard. I am not here for the silly people."

At this moment there was a knock at the door, and on Ariadne's replying, "Come!" a very thin, middle-aged man, with a marvelous, round, black beard, critical dark eyes, and an almost femininely prim gait and manner, came in. He walked sideways to Ariadne, bent almost double over her, and said in a high, careful voice:

"My sweet lady! You were never more forthright than to-night. Your whole performance was axiomatic. The exquisite dryness of it was a tonic after the slush in which playgoers—I only come here, of course—wade, year in, year out. A touch of emotion would have ruined it. But you held back. No saccharine from you! The finest caravan tea without even the smallest lump of sugar, that was what you gave us. Pure thought divorced from emotion! Kindling to the mind!"

"My dear!" said Ariadne. "My dear!"

Then, turning and leaning on her elbow, she said to me:

"Professor Huskin Repps, of the British Museum," and uttered my name to the professor.

In the brief conversation which followed, and which was, I must say, almost entirely over my head and beyond my competence, Ariadne said very little, and Mr. Fanning, whom the professor already seemed to know well, nothing except once, "I can't agree with that." Ariadne was apparently not a great talker. But one felt her thinking hard when others were in talk, thinking ahead of them, above them, under them, all round them. The professor talked, and I spoke a few times tentatively. Then a maid with titian hair

brought in a tall glass of something which looked like thickened milk.

"My Bransononia!" explained Ariadne.

"The best brain builder science has so far discovered," said the professor. "Well, we must leave you."

As he was about to go Ariadne said of me:

"He has submitted a play to me."

The round beard was suddenly projected toward me, and the dark eyes interrogated me with a sharpness which seemed almost hostile.

"Indeed!"

He turned primly round to Ariadne and cocked two questioning eyebrows of bushy black.

"Not quite!" she answered. "Not quite! But with more thought, more brainwork, more of that wrestling of the mind with the problem which we know—perhaps!"

"Ha-ah!"

He gazed down at her.

"The mind and the problem! Forthright! Forthright! And the grit of it between one's teeth, like the finest sand!"

He pushed out the beard toward me again.

"Perhaps?" he said.

And once more his critical—and, it seemed to me, rejecting—eyes busied themselves, to my thinking, about my very entrails.

"That's something to spur on the most laggard mind!" he said, in an almost piercing soprano, and was gone.

I prepared to follow him discreetly, and Ariadne did not try to detain me. She was already sipping her Bransononia, and seemed sinking into reverie.

As I pressed her soft, white hand she said:

"He knows!"

"He?"

"Huskin Repps."

"Yes? What?"

"The value of a tingling dryness in art. Beware of saccharine, dear man."

Fools love it; but I don't want fools in the Parthenon Theater. There are plenty of stiles in London."

"Stiles!" I said, somewhat startled.

"Where the offal is profuse. Let the fools go there. They must not come near me."

She drew her robe closer about her feet with a carefully splendid gesture, and turned her head away with a deep sigh.

I went out reverently, quite forgetting to nod to Mr. Leo Fanning.

CHAPTER III.

From that evening onward I was included in Ariadne's circle.

It was an understood thing that Ariadne considered me a "promising" man and that I was toiling hard o' nights on a play which she earnestly hoped might eventually come up to her standard of what a play ought to be, but which didn't do at all, as yet.

Although I was over thirty, and had published many books which had attained success, and had also had two plays produced in London, both of which had made a good deal of money, I felt, now, like a youthful beginner, who might perhaps have some talent, but who had yet to prove himself, so great was the spell of Ariadne upon me, so high did I feel her standard to be.

She never mentioned my books. Perhaps she had never heard of them, for she told me once quite frankly that she only found time to read the few great classics which were in accord with her temperament, "perhaps a peculiar one." But she knew of my plays. This I know, because she once said, in the presence of a few of her intimates, who were gathered together in the hanging garden of Westminster, "He has *tried* already, the dear man!" And then she had given me a wonderful smile mingled of pity and encouragement.

Her circle was not very large. How

could it be, when far the greater number of people are fools? But it included distinguished men and women, professors, poetesses, painters, sculptors, scientific men, a musician or two, a decorator or two, an architect, one novelist—Jasper Trent, of America—and several "thinkers," who were also very well born and very much in society. Some theoretical politicians might also be seen in Marmion Street from time to time, but never an actor or an actress. Ariadne was very sorry for her comrades of the stage.

"All thought processes seem quite alien to them," she sometimes said. "I have infinite difficulty in finding suitable people to act with me. I am always searching for minds, but I seldom find them. So I try to find wax upon which I can set my impress at rehearsal."

She was said to be "very wonderful" at rehearsal.

Mr. Murryan and Mr. Leo Fanning I had never encountered again. They were evidently not of the habitués of Marmion Street. Professor Huskin Repps, however, was continually there, and I began to think that he was delicately in love with Ariadne, for he hung about her in a prim and yet at times almost ecstatic way, and showed himself intensely critical of most of those who were admitted to her intimacy.

"It is a very precious mind!" I have heard him say. "It must not be contaminated by folly or ignorance. One must watch over it and guard it."

In Ariadne's circle there was one figure which intrigued me.

This was a man of perhaps about thirty or thirty-two, called Augustus Transome, whom I might possibly have thought almost second-rate if I had not met him in Ariadne's house. He looked to me like a Jew, but I was not certain that he was a Jew. His nose was not predatory, though it was slightly upturned and unduly prolonged. He was

always very well, even smartly, dressed, was quiet, and wore a carefully trimmed mustache. His voice was rather thick and slow, and really I could not help thinking, sometimes, that he had the ghost of a cockney accent. He said very little. In this he was not unlike Ariadne, who was not a great talker and who, I knew, disdained what she called "cackle." But his silence did not seem deeply intellectual, like hers. There was something sly, something almost furtive and underhand about them.

I never heard Mr. Transome speak about money, but I felt that he was rich. Nobody in Ariadne's circle explained him to me, but everybody seemed to take him for granted. So, of course, I took him for granted, too. He took very little notice of me, though he was always very polite; but now and then I observed his small eyes fixed upon me, and I thought there was something appraising in their gaze, as if Mr. Transome—"Augustus," Ariadne called him—were considering what exact value I represented, or might eventually represent, in hard cash.

Ariadne never spoke to me directly of the play I was trying to bring up to her standard, but she often made me feel that she was thinking deeply about it and about me, was mentally, perhaps, trying to help me with it. I felt sure that she knew exactly what ought to be done to it, but after that telegram, I dared not attempt to discuss it with her. The play was my job; the judgment of it was hers. To each one a different task. I had once heard her say, "Those who try to help and lift up others with their own superior gifts and powers only put a top varnish on natural incompetence." And it had struck me as a very just, and even a very subtle, remark. So I knew I must work out my own salvation.

But my desire to reach intellectual heights worthy of Ariadne made me

work very slowly, and my play was not ready when "Realistic and Idealistic Love" began to stagger on its last legs. Professor Simeon Jenkins' translation from the Dutch was not finished, either. Another play must be found at once.

On a memorable Sunday afternoon the question of the next production at the Parthenon was discussed by a select segment of Ariadne's circle. There were present Professor Repps, Professor Simeon Jenkins, Mrs. Lascelles, the poetess and essayist; Lady Burnett, the well-known portrait painter, who had painted Ariadne three times; Eustace Delminius, the composer; Jasper Trent, Augustus Transome, and I, of course, though I scarcely knew why. I think it must have been because I was working for Ariadne and she wished to help me by, as it were, identifying me with her art and her future.

It was really a conclave. We sat around a narrow, oak table, oblong in form, in the dining room upstairs, and Ariadne told us frankly that she had a very serious, a very vital question to put to us.

She was looking remarkably handsome that day in a robe of cloudy-red brocade, with her magnificent hair parted in the middle and drawn into a Grecian knot at the back of her head.

The question she had to put to us was this:

Some one called "Jock Jonesmith," who had never been heard of anywhere, either in London or out of it, but who had been, according to his own written account of himself, bred and brought up in the inner depths of Whitechapel, had written a four-act play, and had actually had the cheek to send it to Ariadne, with a letter. In this he stated that his Whitechapel pals thought it prime, that a "Whitechapel school," akin to the "Manchester school," of playwrights would shortly claim the attention of the world, that Mr. Jonesmith was considered, in Whitechapel,

to be the most fit and proper person to be the leader of this as yet unheard-of "school," and that Ariadne, of all people, had been selected by Mr. Jones-Smith and his pals as the most suitable manageress and actress in London to make him, his work, and his school known to the public.

Ariadne had read his play, and had gathered us, a few of the really mattering intelligences, together to consult us as to whether she should put it on at the Parthenon immediately after the imminent withdrawal of "Realistic and Idealistic Love." The play was called "Sally Eliza," and dealt mainly with Jewish pugilists and their female adherents. The heroine was unable to pronounce an *h* even when under the influence of drink, and was a pure-bred cockney. Was it possible, or was it not possible, for Ariadne to undertake such a part in such a play?

I shall never forget the expressions upon the faces around the oblong, oak table while Ariadne was telling us all this and when she had told it. Beads of perspiration stood out on the small, but bulbous, forehead of Professor Huskin Repps; Professor Simeon Jenkins, who was totally bald, flushed violently all over his usually milk-white head; Mrs. Lascelles, a woman dark as the night, with wildly rolling black eyes, looked tormented, like a pythoness suffering from a severe attack of indigestion; Lady Burnett, who resembled a remarkably well-made cottage loaf drawn fresh from the oven, seemed to "give," as if her dough had suddenly suffered a mysterious change; Eustace Delminius, who was exactly like an Anglo-Indian major brought up from the cradle on curry, drew his enormous mustaches into his mouth and sent them forth again with epileptic regularity. As to Jasper Trent, a big, clean-shaven, Italian-looking man, with a figure like a vat and a countenance as expressive as Naples on a hot day, he got up and

rolled up and down the room, holding his hands to his sides as if about to loom into a fit of hysteria.

Only Augustus Transome seemed unmoved. He sat perfectly still. But his furtive eyes darted to and fro in their sockets, as if opportunities were presenting themselves to him from all the points of the compass. I couldn't, of course, see myself. But I know I was thoroughly shocked, and the world seemed to founder about me at the thought of Ariadne appearing on the stage of the Parthenon in a piece called "Sally Eliza."

When Ariadne ceased speaking, there was an awful silence, which was broken by two high, soprano notes, almost like an emotional hiccup, from Professor Huskin Repps. Ariadne turned to him with an amply gracious, almost an embracing, gesture.

"I know!" she said. "Blessed man, I know! But wait a moment before you condemn your Ariadne. I never act upon impulse. I am always guided by pure reason backed up by clear intelligence. I have studied this play alone minutely. And I have written out an analysis of it which I have here."

She produced from a large blotter, bound in old silver, which lay in front of her, some sheets of manuscript closely written in her minute, donlike calligraphy.

"Hear me before you condemn me as a madwoman!" she said with a noble sonority which made the small room vibrate. "And when I have read, answer me this"—her narrow eyes swept over our faces—"is the fact of a cockney accent an insuperable objection to my playing the part of Sally Eliza?"

With that she began to read.

Her analysis of my play had been masterly, but this was more masterly still, because more elaborate, more searching, more minute. The whole of young Jones-Smith's play was in it, with all Ariadne had thought about it.

Whitechapel literally seemed to rise up and to live in it, with all its amazing vitality, its crudity, its black charm, its thick-lipped, shining-eyed, crinkly haired fascination. I have never been more enthralled in my life than I was by that manuscript and by Ariadne's calm and clear and completely unbiased reading of it.

When she ceased, Jasper Trent broke into a roar of:

"A masterpiece! A masterpiece!" which was like an eruption of Vesuvius. Mrs. Lascelles was in tears, through which she murmured, "Prose as perfect as 'Will of the Mill' or one of the Meynell essays!" As for the rest, they simply "went for" Ariadne in a spontaneous outburst of delicately executed and beautifully bloodless adoration. But then came the great debate: *Could* Ariadne play a part with a cockney accent, and *could* she leave out her *h*? Was it possible? Was it to be done? Even if it were possible and were to be done, could she ever learn to do it, she who was the fine flower of intellectuality and scholarship upon the London stage, she whose "note" was so loftily aristocratic, so rarely expressive of the only true aristocracy, that of the educated brain?

The debate was hot and tremendous. We all took part in it, except Mr. Augustus Transome, and it lasted till the day fell into evening and the pale lights were lit in Marmion Street. Even then it was not over, for we had only reached the point when Professor Repps, in his most shrieking soprano, was exclaiming:

"Before deciding we must hear you drop an *h*! That is essential! Ariadne must drop an *h*! Till that has been done, no decision is possible!"

On this a plum-colored Scotchwoman appeared at the door and asked if she might bring in supper.

Supper! Was there indeed to be

supper? There was, and it was a champagne supper from the Ritz!

I shall never forget that supper. It was really a delicate uproar of intellectuality such as Westminster can have seldom heard. Every one was brilliant at once, except Augustus Transome, who scarcely spoke a word and who drank nothing but barley water. Jasper Trent bellowed epigrams, marred only by parentheses. The two professors talked one against the other, while I persistently tried in vain to interrupt them. Lady Burnett sketched Ariadne in charcoal with one hand, while she carried mayonnaise to her fiercely chattering mouth with the other. Mrs. Lascelles—yes, believe it, for it is true—laughed, actually laughed, till she cried at the frantic witticisms of Delminius, and over the ice pudding made a pun in Italian which ought to be handed down to the coming generation. And Ariadne, enthroned in a great Venetian chair and trifling with a peach, a nectarine, a nut, as the case might be, dreamed over the wondrous scene which she had evoked, and wove her thoughts about us, tranquilly, steadfastly, unrestingly.

But at last there came a pause in the delicious tumult. Professor Repps had struck upon the uncovered supper table with a small knife of Georgian silver.

"We are here for a decision," he said. "And it is time we came to it."

He wiped his face with a handkerchief of Surah silk.

"I have invented a sentence for Ariadne to say to us. It is this: Hi, Henry, here! Has hideous Horace had his hateful ham? My sweet lady"—he swung primly, yet worshipfully, toward Ariadne—"can you memorize that?"

"Please repeat it again, blessed man!" said Ariadne, leaning forward with a look of intense concentration on her face, while we all sat breathless.

"Hi—Henry—here! Has—hideous Horace—had—his—hateful—ham?" repeated Professor Repps, gazing at her with the feverish anxiety of an author asking great things of his interpreter.

Ariadne sat back and shut her eyes for a moment. Then she opened them, and a startling change came into her face. It seemed to me that the lofty intellectuality faded gradually and completely out of it, that its place was taken by a—dare I say it?—by a curiously common, almost a vulgar, look that was nevertheless enticing because it was, apparently, so entirely natural. It was almost as if I had seen the noble façade of the Parthenon Theater fade away into the twinkling, cheerful, and unpretentious street frontage of a White-chapel public house. Then she twisted her generous lips sideways, leaned forward, cocked her Grecian head to the right, and said in the most authentic cockney I ever heard:

"'Ello! 'I, 'Enery, 'ere! 'As 'ideous 'Orace 'ad 'is 'ateful 'am? 'Ello! 'I, 'Enery—'ere! 'Ello! 'Ello!"

We gazed at Ariadne and at one another so amazed we were all stricken speechless, till at last the well-known, sonorous voice, with its strongly intellectual and cultivated intonation, broke the spell.

"Tell me, dear things," it said, "is it possible? Can I drop an *h* upon the stage of the Parthenon Theater?"

"I have never in my life heard *h*'s dropped to such absolute perfection," said Mrs. Lascelles.

And as if moved by an irresistible impulse she rose from her seat, went to Ariadne, and kissed her just above the left eyebrow.

"It's pure genius! It's absolutely forthright!" exclaimed the professor.

There was not one dissentient voice in our company.

"Then the play is to be done!" said Ariadne, with a sudden, keen look in her face which seemed to be unnoticed

by the others, but which startled me. "You pass it? You have my word for its value as a human document and as a piece of instinctive art in its genre. Pass the dropped *h* and the cockney accent, and I put the play into rehearsal to-morrow."

Never before had I seen Ariadne display such swift energy. It is true that the supper from the Ritz, a champagne supper, had rendered us all intellectually and vocally energetic that evening. But Ariadne seemed to have sprung into an almost startling life which owed nothing to champagne, mayonnaise, and ice pudding. There was something I thought of for a moment as released in her manner. A shutter seemed to drop and a strongly lit window to take its place, with a view into a sharply defined room beyond, a room in which no Leonardo hung upon the wall, but something quite different.

But her energy had the effect of rendering her auditors suddenly anxious, timorous, undecided.

A long and agitated debate ensued, which gradually centered round one terrifically important question:

If "Sally Eliza" were put on at the Parthenon, would it bring "the wrong people" to the theater?

That was the great fear of Professor Repps, Mrs. Lascelles, and Professor Simeon Jenkins, partaken of, though in lesser degree, by Eustace Delminius and Lady Burnett. Jasper Trent declared that even a dropped *h* would never induce that contemptible and corrupt spawn of ignorance mated with brutality, the average playgoer, to put its nose—if, indeed, it might be said to have a nose, having, rather, a snout—into the precincts of the Parthenon Theater. And I scarcely knew what to say, or even to think, so confused and excited was I by this time. As to Augustus Transome, he said nothing at all, but lay back in his chair, watching Ariadne with his little, keen eyes half

shut and one side tooth showing under his carefully trained mustache.

The "wrong people" in the Parthenon Theater! Could that risk be taken by Ariadne? Suppose Whitechapel were to arise out of its darkness lit by the flares of gin palaces and to assail those doors through which had entered hitherto only the elect of London, the university towns, Manchester, and the few other centers of earnestness and intellect? Suppose that "bruisers" and their terrible females wrapped in shawls and crowned with feathered hats, should be drawn to a "show" in which their psychology was dissected and their crude passions were—in a masterly way, of course; we had Ariadne's word for that—laid bare! Suppose the flappers of the West End and the degenerate "nuts"—Professor Repps' word of which Mrs. Lascelles had to ask an explanation—who ministered to their anæmic pleasures, were to follow in their wake in search of a new sensation? Suppose—worst supposition of all—"smart society" were to hear of the hubbub and roll up in its motors to "see the fun?" Ariadne would be ruined, utterly ruined! Her unique position would be lost forever. She was the actress of the fit, though few. She disdained the herd. But how could she keep the herd out, if it came bellowing to seek her?

The question might have been hotly debated all night if it had not been for a clinching sentence uttered by—of all people—Mr. Augustus Transome.

He suddenly ran a pointed tongue over his rather protruding lips, and said in his husky voice:

"They won't come! Miss Marshall"—he always called Ariadne Miss Marshall—"Miss Marshall will know how to keep them away."

And abruptly the debate collapsed.

We looked upon Ariadne, who said nothing, but merely returned our look with her unfathomable, though not

large, eyes, and suddenly we knew that Augustus Transome was right. There was something about Ariadne, her aura, perhaps—yes, that was it, her aura—which would inevitably prevent the Philistines from drawing near.

Ariadne would know how to keep them away!

CHAPTER IV.

The rehearsals of "Sally Eliza" had begun, and, meanwhile, I was working feverishly to finish my play. Somehow, the success of a young man from Whitechapel with such an unheard-of name as Jock Jonesmith had stung me in my tenderest part, my vanity, I suppose I must call it. I have said "the success." This may seem, perhaps, to some, a premature word, but not to me. This fellow, this Jock, had achieved the greatest possible success already; he had succeeded with Ariadne; whereas I, a man of parts, a man with a decent Christian name and a surname which did not combine in ridiculous juxtaposition two gross familiarities, had not succeeded. I was toiling to get a thing right, while Jock—the name was in my ears abhorrently, day and night—had got it right at the first go off. Ariadne had "passed" him, and she had not "passed" me. With Jock it was "yes," with me it was "perhaps." I detested Jock; but he made me work as I had never worked before, with green tea and wet towels.

I must confess, also, that at this time I was the victim of jealousy. For I now saw but little of Ariadne, while young Jonesmith, no doubt, was with her every day. "Realistic and Idealistic Love" was still running, but feebly, to its end with a daily waning vitality, and "Sally Eliza" was being molded into shape by Ariadne and Jock Jonesmith. I imagined them together in the darkened and shrouded theater, she directing, he agreeing, metaphorically on his knees to the mistress of his destiny.

I saw them standing together in the wings, sitting together far back in the auditorium, with only charwomen and black cats as chaperons. And my heart was hot within me.

Was I, then, in love with Ariadne? Did my daring leap so high as that?

I remembered her lofty abhorrence of saccharine, her distaste even for sugar. I remembered Professor Repps' contemptuous allusion to "slush" and, following on it, Ariadne's praise of "tingling dryness," and I realized that I was nearing dangerous ground. Ariadne was a great intellect; but I did not know that she was a great heart. And in any case, I was wholly unworthy of her. I bound a wet towel around my fevered brow, drank a brew of green tea, seized my "relief pen," and strove almost ferociously to be intellectual. I would take my play to the heights. I would show Jock Jonesmith what gray matter really was.

Now and then I was privileged to see Ariadne in Marmion Street during this time, but only for a few minutes, and I never met Jock Jonesmith there. Ariadne seemed remote when I saw her. She was gracious as ever. She looked quite wonderful; but she said very little, and was evidently drowned deep in thought, was immersed in reflection.

"I am wrestling," she said one day, as if in explanation of her demeanor, "as Jacob did with the angel. At night I am 'Realistic and Idealistic Love;' by day I am 'Sally Eliza.' It stretches the brain almost to snapping point.

"I am wrestling, too," I ventured to say.

"You?" she said vaguely.

"With the play."

"The play?"

She laid an emphasis on the definite article.

"My play."

"Oh, yes."

She sighed, with her eyes upon me. It seemed to me that there was a thin

light of sarcasm in their gaze. I dared not say more.

One day when I saw her, for not more than five minutes, a strange thing happened. She dropped an *h* in the twilight.

We had been speaking of the expression of the emotions, and, in an effort to live up to her standard, I had quoted Charles Darwin's remarks about fear causing contraction of the platysma myoides muscle.

"I know!" she answered negligently. "I know!"

She was silent for a moment, and then she said:

"A similar effect is often brought about by 'error.'"

"By—by——" I stammered.

"I said, by 'error,'" she answered tranquilly.

I scarcely know how I took my leave and got out of the house that day; I scarcely know how I reached my flat in Jermyn Street. But when I was there, shut in, I knew that Jock Jonesmith must be responsible for what had just happened; I recognized his influence in that twice-dropped *h*. I didn't blame Ariadne for it. Indeed, I admired her more than ever, seeing in her lapse a great piece of art. She was already living "Sally Eliza." Jock Jonesmith's heroine was becoming part of her very life. She was assimilating this Whitechapel woman, was drawing this creature, so utterly remote from her real self, into her very blood, was thinking her thoughts, was even dropping her *h*'s. It was magnificent, but it was terribly trying for those who worshiped her and who now must feel shut out, while Jock Jonesmith was at the very door of the holy of holies.

One day she spoke of Jock. Her exact expression was: "Jock won't allow an arranged first-night audience. He says a theater is a public place and must be at all times open to the public."

I reported this to the circle. I could do no less. I drove in a fast taxi to the British Museum, and demanded to see Professor Huskin Repps. After a long delay, they said he was not in the house, but must be somewhere in the museum. I searched. I caught him, at last, in the midst of the Elgin marbles. I drew him into the refreshment room, the only place in the museum which is practically never visited, and there, amid the famous relics of what the human family was wont to eat in the long-dead past, I told him what Ariadne had said.

He was thunderstruck. I have scarcely ever seen a man so affected. I was obliged to take desperate measures, to call for a cup of museum tea. This made him very angry; in his distraction of mind he inadvertently drank it to the dregs—but it brought him round. He thanked me, eventually, most cordially for what I had done, and we parted with the understanding that he would at once take "all necessary steps" to frustrate the extraordinary machinations of young Jonesmith. The professor had never seen him. None of the circle had seen him, for Ariadne, as her custom was, never permitted even her dearest friends to come to rehearsal. No one who went regularly to Marmion Street had ever seen her rehearse, so far as we knew, although every one who went there said she was "wonderful" at rehearsal. This privacy at the Parthenon was, therefore, no new departure. But it was now evident that young Jonesmith must be made to understand his place. The fact that Ariadne had evidently not made him understand it was terribly ominous. I could see that Professor Repps feared the worst, and I taxied back to Jermyn Street in a condition which was certainly not conducive to fundamental brainwork.

However, I set to at the play, there and then, with such sacred fury that,

after sitting up the whole of the succeeding night, I finished it as the voice of the last milkman woke the echoes about St. James' Street.

Jock Jonesmith had caused me to be the victim of a tremendous spasm of intellectuality such as had never shaken me before. This unknown genius from Whitechapel had released my genius unwittingly. My intense jealousy of him had enabled me to make the effort of a lifetime. As I looked at my manuscript I knew that never again should I be able to pour such a torrent of gray matter upon paper. I felt as if the whole of my burning brain lay there in those lines of ink. Even Ariadne, I felt, would be proud of me now. For a moment I triumphed. For a moment I defied Jock Jonesmith, felt him to be far below me. Let him do what he would, I was positive that I was his superior. It was impossible that any man born and bred in the depths of Whitechapel could rise to such heights of pure intellectuality as I had done in the at-last-finished play which lay on the table before me so modestly, so unassumingly.

In the heat of that almost delirious moment I was moved to strong action. That marvelous invention, a telephone, stood on a side table near me. I sprang upon it, gripped the receiver, and rang number two Marmion Street. After a prolonged pause, partially filled by several wrong numbers kindly arranged by the operator, a voice with a Scotch accent inquired what it was. I gave my name and demanded Miss Marshall. The voice said that she was engaged. I was in such a state of excitement that, for a moment, I was the victim of delusion, and was guilty of the exclamation:

"Good God! Not to Jock Jonesmith!"

"Yes, sir!" replied the voice.

I believe I reeled at the receiver. Nevertheless, I had the strength to say:

"Impossible! I will not believe it. The—the circle will never stand it."

"Sir," said the voice, severely, I thought, "it is as I say. Miss Marshall is engaged with Mr. Jonesmith at the moment. They are breakfasting together in the dining room."

Engaged with Mr. Jonesmith! The relief was so immense that I nearly broke down, but I managed to control myself and whispered:

"I'll telegraph. Good-by!"

And I rang off and fell into a chair by my writing table.

Ten minutes later, from the St. James Street post office, I sent the following telegram to Ariadne:

Completed the play this morning at seven-forty-nine after working on it all night. When may I come and read it to you?

Then I returned home, plunged into a cold bath, had an electric face massage, parted my hair with a trembling comb, dressed in a dark suit, drank five cups of strong coffee, tried in vain to swallow a kidney, and sat down to wait for the answer to my telegram with the manuscript of my play in my hand.

It was nearly noon when there was a knock on my door and a telegram was handed to me. It ran as follows:

Not till after the first night of "Sally Eliza." The true artist never mars a major with a minor impression. Greetings.

ARIADNE MARSHALL.

"Damn 'Sally Eliza'!" I exclaimed.

And I am ashamed to say that I flung the telegram on the Turkey carpet and set my left foot on it.

That evening I again went to the Parthenon Theater. I felt that I must see Ariadne, if only upon the stage. There was scarcely any one in the house, for "Realistic and Idealistic Love" was now practically moribund, but I saw in the left grand-tier box, next the stage, Augustus Transome, with a most strange-looking companion beside him.

This companion was a short, but

enormously broad and tremendously strong-set man, with a neck like that of a Herefordshire bull, two thick ears, a huge, broken nose, tiny eyes, and three teeth of pure gold, which glittered in his enormous mouth with swollen lips when the lights were turned up. On his hands he wore two diamond rings. His big, bullet head looked as if it had been shaved about a week ago. Augustus Transome, of course, was in evening dress, but his friend wore a light suit of an enormous-checked pattern. And, when he stood up in the first entr'acte, I perceived that the coat was divided at the back into voluminous square tails, above which appeared two yellow buttons far larger than the average half-crown piece.

What could this personage be doing in the Parthenon Theater?

For a moment I thought of going upstairs to the box and seeking an interview with Augustus Transome. But the presence of the other man held me back. What could I say to such a one, if I were introduced to him? What topics could he and I have in common?

He stood there in the box with his huge hands thrust deep in his pockets, staring about the house with an expression so surly that it bordered on the malignant. Then he swung awkwardly round and went out, followed by Augustus Transome, who looked like a midget in the wake of a bull.

Should I follow them? Had they gone to the bar, if there was a bar? I thought it probable. I could almost see the big fellow spreading himself with a glass containing "a drop of Lizzie" in his gigantic red fist. I could almost hear his thick voice uttering coarse witticisms to the bargmaid. And I refrained. I could not desecrate the impression Ariadne's art had just made on me by seeking such company, and I stuck to my seat till the curtains parted on the second act.

But, as the evening wore on, it

seemed to me that this same art of Ariadne was not quite what it had been. Perhaps she was tired after the long rehearsals, or perhaps the emptiness of the house affected her. Whatever the reason, I could not help noticing that the intellectuality of her performance was less marked than formerly. It seemed really to come and go, like the fitfully genteel accent of a naturally vulgar person carrying on conversation with some one above her to whom she is trying to live up. This distressed me, got almost on my nerves. And I asked myself presently whether even an empty house and the fatigue of rehearsal would account for it sufficiently. Looking about me, as it were, for some more cogent explanation of this painful phenomenon, my eyes strayed to Augustus Transome's box. Most of the lights in the auditorium were turned out, but sufficient illumination remained to define the tremendous figure of the stocky Herefordshire bull in the checked suit. Could he be the reason? Could this unwonted personality be subtly overwhelming the sensitive, artistic temperament of Ariadne?

The wrong people in the theater! I remembered the debate over the supper table in Marmion Street, and I trembled.

I think it was at this moment that I realized how important an audience is to an artist, how dependent the highly strung and delicately balanced soul of the supreme creative executant—for I contend that a great artist is just that—is upon the crowd assembled to receive its revelation! Not that the creature in the checked suit amounted to a crowd! But even I was conscious that there was something vulgarly powerful—I might go so far as to say coarsely tremendous—in his personality, and this might well be felt by Ariadne.

In the third act of the play, a catastrophe happened. Ariadne, on the stage, dropped an *h*. The line was,

"How can you expect a woman who is guided by pure reason to love at first sight?" Ariadne distinctly said, "'ow." From that moment I was mentally prostrate. I sat with shut eyes, waiting for the curtain to descend. When at last it fell, I got up mechanically. My eyes instinctively went to Augustus Transome's box, and I saw the woman who had once asked me to come and see Miss Marshall speaking to the man in the checked suit. He nodded, throwing his dented chin upward; she turned; he followed her out of the box. Augustus Transome vanished behind them. His back looked more furtive than ever.

As I went out, a horrible supposition came into my mind, a supposition so horrible that it seemed to turn my bones almost to wax.

Could Jock Jonesmith and the man in the checked suit be one and the same?

When I was out in the street, dwarfed by the noble façade of the theater, I stood still and hesitated. If I went home in uncertainty, I knew I should be unable to sleep. Yet Ariadne had not sent for me. Perhaps, however, she did not know that I had been in the theater. She never saw people in the audience. I had her word for that. The box-office man this time might have missed me. I resolved to give her the benefit of my doubt, and I went round to the stage door and sent in my card, on which, with a trembling hand, I had written:

May I see you?

Almost immediately the answer came back:

Miss Marshall's cordial greetings and she is very sorry she is engaged on a matter connected with "Sally Eliza."

As I turned away, it was beginning to rain, I muttered between my teeth, "Damn 'Sally Eliza'!"

The phenomenon in the checked suit, with tails and yellow buttons, was Jock Jonesmith. I could doubt that no longer.

CHAPTER V.

But I was wrong, and I found out my mistake at breakfast next morning. When I opened my *Daily Mail*, the very first paragraph which caught my eye was this:

GREAT REVIVAL OF BOXING

A great revival of the noble art of boxing is imminent. Mr. Frederick Catford, who now owns seven London theaters and is building three more, has taken Olympia and intends shortly to hold a great boxing festival there. He is arranging a match between "Pug" Bullen, the champion English heavyweight, and Tim Milligan, the great Australian boxer, who knocked out Bert Lockford in seven rounds in Tasmania in 19—

By the way, the arts seem drawing together in a manner which promises well for the future. Last night Mr. Pug Bullen was present in a box at the Parthenon Theater to see Miss Ariadne Marshall's highly intellectual performance in "Realistic and Idealistic Love." We understand that Mr. Bullen expressed his appreciation of the actress and the play in his own hearty and unconventional manner.

It is rumored that Miss Marshall will shortly present a new play at the Parthenon which is not wholly unconnected with the noble art of which Mr. Pug Bullen is such a proficient exponent.

So the creature in the suit was not Jock Jonesmith! My relief for a moment was intense, but it was succeeded by a keen anxiety which I knew the circle would share. Mr. Pug Bullen's presence in the Parthenon Theater, in a box, too, was certainly of ill omen for the future. Knowing my England, I knew that where Mr. Bullen went his admirers and adherents were certain to follow. And for a moment I saw a hideous vision, the Parthenon Theater crammed with an audience such as assembles on a "star" night at the "ring" at Blackfriars; the wrong people enthroned to the ruin of Ariadne.

None of the circle "read" the *Daily Mail*, but it seems that they all "saw" it, and this paragraph, backed up by the information about Mr. Pug Bullen's appearance, dress, and general per-

sonality, which I considered it my duty to give, roused the keenest alarm among them. It was obvious to us all that the circle must take the field for the defense of Ariadne and her interests, even against herself.

"If we only knew Mr. Jack——"

"Jock!" I interposed.

"Is it—Mr. Jock Jonesmith, we might know better what should be done!" wailed Mrs. Lascelles.

But not one of us knew or had ever seen the gentleman in question. He kept himself strictly secret. So we were forced to act without any sufficient groundwork of personal knowledge, "a severe handicap to the trained intellect," as Professor Repps very aptly remarked to Professor Simeon Jenkins.

During the three weeks which elapsed before the production of "Sally Eliza" at the Parthenon, a painful contest of, I should suppose, an unexampled nature raged between the circle and Ariadne, raged politely, obscurely, almost subterraneously, but raged, nevertheless. It was led on our side by Professor Huskin Repps, and it was concerned with the seating arrangements for the first night of "Sally Eliza."

Hitherto Ariadne's "first nights" had been almost holy occasions, functions deliberately kept sacred to the elect. The distribution of the seats for them had been as carefully discussed, as methodically carried out, as that of the seats for a coronation in Westminster Abbey. Professor Repps, Professor Simeon Jenkins, Mrs. Lascelles, and others to the number, I think, of six, had always sat in committee with Ariadne to supervise the arrangements. And, except, of course, to the press, not one seat had ever been allotted to any one who had not been considered absolutely worthy of being present. The result had been that the audience at the Parthenon on a first night had always been utterly unlike the audience one

sees at any other first night in London. Instead of rows of smart and would-be smart women, of "resting" actresses and their cavaliers, of fashionable lawyers and their wives, of theater owners, profiteers, and tea-party young men with narrow foreheads and "waisted" coats, one saw serried ranks of professors, men of brain from Manchester, members of the Athenæum Club, essayists, poets, and poetesses, grave women from Edinburgh, and even from as far as Dublin came up specially for the occasion, writers on *The Quarterly* and *The Round Table* and even *The Herbert Journal*, with a few choice members of the aristocracy, not the new, but the ancient and real aristocracy which still values brains and can find time for serious reading. Now and then a prime minister, if judged suitable, came, and it was rumored that once an Archbishop of Canterbury had had an armchair provided for him in the wings on the prompt side. On one forever-memorable occasion, too, the whole gallery had been allotted, by special request, to members of the Savile Club, headed by a celebrated caricaturist and writer whose name is a household word wherever artistry is prized.

Was the first night of "Sally Eliza" to be an exception to the golden rule which had hitherto been observed religiously in Dominion Street, the street honored by the presence of the Parthenon? The circle was determined that it should not; hence the struggle with Ariadne. Or was it, indeed, rather with the unseen power behind the throne, Jock Jonesmith?

The struggle raged by letter. For Ariadne, in response to repeated and earnest requests by the circle for personal interviews, alleged that "as a true artist" she dared not "disperse" her energy at such a moment by seeing even her dearest friends and loyal adherents.

"I must follow my invariable custom," she wrote to Professor Repps,

"and keep my entire brain and soul for the work in hand. It taxes the whole of me. I need not tell you what the wrestling of the mind with the problem means to those of us who are true to ourselves." In reply the professor pointed out that on former occasions Ariadne had always thought it a sacred duty to go personally into the matter of the first-night audience. Why make a change now? This brought Ariadne more into the open, as it was intended to do, and elicited the statement that on the first night of "Sally Eliza" she had decided to take a new departure and to let the seats for the first night be sold in the ordinary way.

"After long and deep consideration," she wrote, "I have come to the conclusion that I have made a mistake in always surrounding myself with my beloved friends and adherents on a first night. To do this is not to show true courage. The theater is a public place, and a new piece ought to be submitted to the judgment of the ordinary public. I have therefore decided that the seats for the first night of 'Sally Eliza' shall be offered for sale in the usual way."

It was the voice, as we all knew, of Jock Jonesmith speaking from the lips of Ariadne, and we could not sit down under it. If my metaphors are mixed I cannot help it; the recollection of it all brings back the agony of mind I suffered at that period. Jasper Trent was put up to protest against such a Philistine departure from the custom of the past, a custom which insured a solemn verdict of the elect instead of the judgment of fools in their folly. He received a typewritten reply from Ariadne's secretary saying that Miss Marshall was very sorry, but she was not at liberty to change her decision.

This phrase, as may be supposed, roused the circle's protective instinct. It was now obvious that the remark which had originally given birth to my anxiety and driven me hotfoot to the

British Museum accurately expressed the present truth of things. Ariadne was held in durance by this Whitechapel interloper. She was no longer a free agent. She must be freed. But how?

Some one thought of Augustus Transome. It was Lady Burnett, I think. Mr. Transome had taken no part in our struggle. He was, in a way, "suspect." For it was with him that I had seen Mr. Pug Bullen at the theater, an unexplained mystery which had affected us all most painfully. So we had not sought his adherence to our campaign. But now, in our distress, we turned to him. He was a very old friend of Ariadne, and some one—Delminius, I think, or it may have been Johnnie Dean, said that he had "great weight" with her. To my surprise, I was chosen to interview Mr. Transome and endeavor to enlist his assistance. Professor Repps, of course, wanted to go. He always wanted to take the lead in everything connected with Ariadne. But the circle interfered. Jasper Trent said that the professor was already on the verge of a nervous breakdown and must keep himself for his letter writing to Ariadne. And Lady Burnett was good enough to say that "when I liked" I had "a way with me," which might "come round" Augustus Transome.

Mr. Transome was communicated with by telephone at his flat in Maida Vale, and said that he was laid up with a sharp attack of lumbago, but would see me if I would call.

So I went to Maida Vale.

I found him in bed, wrapped in hot flannels and steeped in Elliman's Embrocation, and, at once, told him my errand. He listened, showing one tooth. I don't know why, but I considered this a bad sign. When I had put the matter fully before him, he was silent. I waited patiently for some sign from him. It came at last. He was good enough to say:

"I am too ill to interfere."

"But," I said, "Ariadne will be ruined if she carries out this plan."

"Why?" he said.

"Why? God knows who will get in on the first night. Anybody might be there."

Suddenly I thought of Mr. Pug Bullen. It may have been rude, considering all the circumstances, but I was carried away by my feelings, and I exclaimed:

"Pug Bullen might be there!"

Augustus Transome's small eyes darted sideways and back again.

"Why not?" he said.

"Why not?" I ejaculated. "A man like that would ruin the appearance of any audience, even the most intellectual. He stands out like a cairn. He might come in checks. He has three gold teeth, two thick ears, two diamond rings, yellow buttons. You must see that he is impossible!"

"Pug Bullen's a national hero," said Augustus Transome.

"Do you mean to tell me you are so mad that you wish to see a national hero at one of Ariadne's first nights?" I said with scarcely restrained passion. "Why, it would be her ruin."

"I am too ill to interfere," repeated Mr. Transome.

"Do you wish to interfere?" I said, looking him squarely in the face in a thoroughly manly way.

August Transome let his small eyes rest upon me for the fraction of a second. Then he made a remark which I shall never forget as long as I live.

"Miss Marshall has been interfered with long enough," he said.

"But Jock Jonesmith——"

He narrowed his eyes.

"Please ring," he said. "I want some camphor liniment."

When I reported the result of my embassy—it was at Mrs. Lascelle's house in Argyll Road, Kensington, celebrated for its collection of Blake's pic-

tures and its bust of Eleonora Duse—there was consternation in the circle.

"That man has gone over to the other side," said Lady Burnett. "He has betrayed us."

"I never believed in him!" cried Professor Repps. "He was never forthright. His intellectual processes were always cloudy."

"He mispronounces the word 'how,'" murmured Mrs. Lascelles. "I detected it at once—'now,' too—but Ariadne would never admit that I was right."

"I shall see Ariadne!" exclaimed Professor Repps, "and I shall see her to-day."

"I advise against that, Huskin, old friend!" said Professor Jenkins firmly.

"Why?" yelled Professor Repps. "Didn't I discover Ariadne? Wasn't it I who first took her to the British Museum? Haven't I formed her mind into the wonderful intellectual engine it has become? Didn't I show her the right path to tread in her art? Wouldn't she have tried melodrama, or even musical comedy, but for me? Didn't I keep her out of Shakespeare for fear she might be called an echo of Ellen Terry? Didn't I bring the right people about her and keep out all the wrong ones? Didn't I——"

"You did, Huskin, old friend, you did! We all know it. Your influence, the influence of the British Museum, has made Ariadne what she is. But that's just it——"

"What's just what?" cried Repps. "Think clearly and express yourself in a forthrightly way or I can't undertake to follow you."

"You feel too strongly about Ariadne to be the best person to make her see the abyss on the edge of which she is standing. She has always distrusted passion. I have heard her say, 'Passion is the condiment which conceals the real flavor of the meat!'"

"A true saying! A true saying!" mur-

mured poor Repps. "Let some one else go."

"I will go," said Professor Jenkins.

He looked round the circle, and his eyes fell on me.

"We are both working for Ariadne," he was good enough to say. "She may listen to us. Come with me to Marmion Street."

CHAPTER VI.

Professor Repps—we had to let the poor man be doing something—was allowed to write to Ariadne on behalf of the circle, begging her to receive us, if only for five minutes. An answer was returned that, as the rehearsals of the play were interrupted for two or three days on account of the illness of Jock Jonesmith, Ariadne would be "at liberty," again that sinister phrase, and would see us. A time was appointed. It was all done by Ariadne's secretary. At that time Professor Jenkins and I repaired to Marmion Street.

We were shown into the drawing-room by one of the Scotchwomen and sat down to wait for Ariadne. We sat in silence for two or three minutes. I think we were both feeling nervous. I know I was. I had felt ill at ease when I entered the house; with each passing second the sensation grew. It seemed to me that there was a different atmosphere in this house from that with which I was familiar, that this austere drawing-room, a soft cloud of blues and greens in a setting of almost ecclesiastical brown, was subtly changed. I glanced about me. My eyes fell on remembered objects, on a breviary bound in gold, a jade idol, the collection of amber faintly lit by the fading sunlight. What was the change? Or was it only in my imagination? I glanced up at the wall and started.

"Look!" I whispered to my companion.

"Eh—what?" he said loudly.

"Hush!" I pointed. "There!"

He followed my eyes.

The famous supposed Leonardo was gone. In its place hung a very bad copy of Frith's terrible picture, long since buried in the national collection, "The Derby Day."

At this moment the door opened and Ariadne came in.

She was dressed in a coat and skirt!

We stood up—somehow. I shall never know how I did it.

She came up to us briskly and shook hands.

"Well, here you are!" she said.

And I thought that her voice was altered. Its slow resonance was surely gone. The peculiar culture of the intonation, something almost carefully delicate and precise, seemed tarnished, though perhaps not wholly lost.

"And now, what is it?" she added, sitting down in a businesslike manner.

I looked at Professor Simeon Jenkins. He cleared his throat and plunged in. I must say that he spoke eloquently. He is, as every one knows, a highly educated man, and he was obviously moved by deep feeling. Without any redundancy, indeed, with extraordinary economy of words, he exposed to Ariadne the deep anxiety of the circle at her new departure, their conviction that she was rushing to—I believe he said "moving toward"—her ruin, their desire to safeguard her from any evil consequences of her own actions. He pointed out to her that she occupied a unique position upon the British stage, as the only thoroughly cultured, the only deeply thoughtful, the only rigidly self-respecting—in the purely artistic sense, of course—actress England possessed. She had never bowed down to the popular idols of the marketplace. She had never sought the applause of fools or the vacant laughter of "groundlings." He repeated the word "groundlings" more than once. The pursuit of money had been always abhorrent to

her. All she had ever sought was the applause of the fit though few, the approbation of the highly cultivated minority who would as soon have set foot in Gehenna as in Drury Lane Theater or the garish palaces of the Strand and Shaftesbury Avenue.

He alluded to "Sally Eliza," and acknowledged that the circle, carried away by her reading and her masterly analysis of the piece, and perhaps also influenced to some extent—for are we not all human at certain moments?—by the champagne supper from the Ritz, had bowed to her obvious desire to produce it, trusting implicitly in her hitherto-unerring judgment of artistic values. Even now, he said, we were all ready and eager, even those of us who had plays waiting for Ariadne to produce in the fullness of time—a touching allusion to his translation from the Dutch and my original play—we were all ready and eager to find merit in "Sally Eliza." But it must be given a proper introduction to the small public which worshiped regularly at the Parthenon. And this could only be done if the time-honored procedure at that theater was adhered to on this occasion, and the seats for the first night "fell into the proper hands." This was, perhaps, a slight error in style. He was sure that Ariadne could not mean to throw herself, a pearl, before the—the—he hesitated, but went on—before the swine of London. He was sure that the distribution of seats would, as always before, be supervised by—

But at this point Ariadne interrupted him.

"There will be no careful distribution of seats, my dear professor," she said. "The seats will be sold in the ordinary way."

"As they are at the Criterion?" said the professor in a voice which vibrated with feeling.

"As they are at the Criterion or anywhere else," said Ariadne.

"The dress circle, perhaps——"

"And the stalls."

"But not the boxes! Impossible—the boxes!"

"And the boxes, too!"

"But Repps' box!"

"Professor Repps' box, too."

"And mine and Mrs. Lascelles' and—and——"

"All the boxes!" said Ariadne with a sort of fatal decision.

The professor got on his feet.

"It is not you who has done this!" he said with fervent conviction. "I know, we all know that we must look elsewhere for the hand that has done this thing."

Here again his style perhaps deviated slightly from the impeccable accurate.

Ariadne was silent, and I saw her eyes stray to the dreadful picture on the wall.

"It is Jock Jonesmith! It is he!"

"I must consider my author, professor."

"Does he consider *us*? Does he consider that man who has steeped you in culture, who has shed the atmosphere of the British Museum about your gift? Does he consider Huskin Repps?"

"I am very sorry, professor. It must be as I say. Indeed, you come too late, in any case."

"Too late?" I said.

"Yes. The box office was opened to the public for "Sally Eliza" this morning at ten o'clock."

Both of us realized in a flash that there was only one thing to be done now, and we did it. We got out of the house as quickly as possible, hailed a taxi, and drove at full speed to the Parthenon Theater.

We were too late. The box office for "Sally Eliza" was already shut for that day. Till to-morrow we could do nothing.

That evening there was another meeting of the circle, held at Professor

Repps' house at the British Museum, that wonderful house in which culture and intellect seem literally to stalk through the lofty rooms, to dream in the vast library, to lie at rest on the deep sofas among the Oriental china, the Burne-Jones pictures, the etchings by Brangwyn, and the portraits of beautiful and intellectual women by Sargent, by Lavery, by McEvoy, by Augustus John. For Repps is no hater of the moderns, and he loves to have beautiful women around him. The most poignant touch of all in that house—and I think we all felt it that evening—was the statue of Ariadne, as Venus draped, by the Balkan sculptor, Mentricksovich, which brooded over the second drawing-room.

When all were assembled and we had drunk Egyptian coffee out of cups of Sèvres, the truth was put before the circle, and we told what we had done.

"When will the box office open to-morrow?" asked Lady Burnett, who was a practical woman, although a great painter.

"At ten o'clock," I replied.

"There's only one thing to be done now," began Lady Burnett.

"We must buy up as many seats as possible!" roared Jasper Trent.

We all agreed. But the question of money arose. Some of us were not very rich. Intellect of the purest kind does not grasp after money. But we all resolved to be ready with the uttermost farthing, and it was understood that each one should bring a check book to the Parthenon Theater on the morrow. All the boxes, of course, would be bought in by us and as many of the stalls as our money would "run to."

We separated about midnight, with the noble feeling that, even though at great cost to ourselves, we should yet be able to protect Ariadne from utter ruin.

But on the following morning the tragedy deepened. When we assem-

bled before the box office precisely on the stroke of ten, and Professor Repps, as our leader, presented himself at the small opening behind which stood Digby, the manager, with a request for all the boxes and as many stalls as possible for the first night of "Sally Eliza," the reply was:

"All seats gone for the first night."

The professor held on to the jutting piece of wood with both hands.

"All seats——" His voice failed him.

"All seats sold for the first night!"

"Impossible!"

"Very sorry, Professor Repps, but by twelve o'clock they were gone."

"It cannot be!"

"It cannot be, Mr. Digby," wailed Mrs. Lascelles from behind.

"Very sorry, Mrs. Lascelles, but——"

"But my box—my box!" shouted the professor.

"Box A, next the stage?"

"Yes, box A, next the stage!"

Digby glanced at a sheet.

"Taken by Mr. Pug Bullen," he answered.

"Pug—Pug Bullen—is it—in my box?" yelled Repps.

"Yes, sir."

"And B—box B?" cried Mrs. Lascelles from the back.

Again Digby glanced at the sheet.

"Sold to Miss Tottie Willoughby, the music-hall star."

"Tottie—what? Tottie what?" cried Mrs. Lascelles.

"Willoughby, the male impersonator, madam," said Digby. "I'm sorry, but all the boxes are gone."

"Who has Box C?" demanded Trent, shouldering his way to the front.

"Sol Israel Isaacstein, Mr. Trent, the owner of the oyster shops in the Strand and the Boxing Palace in the Commercial Road, Whitechapel."

It was enough. This last announcement was enough. We wished to hear nothing more, lest worse should befall us.

We retired in close order, beaten, from the field.

But there was still a last chance, and we resolved to take it. We would not be utterly ousted from the theater which we had come to consider almost as our own.

The gallery seats would be on sale at the doors. We would be there sometimes. The front row of the gallery should be ours. So it was agreed. There was no wavering, no chicken-heartedness. Even Mrs. Lascelles, the most frail and ethereal of women, this-tledown with the brain of a muse, did not shrink from the ordeal of beating her way up into that so-called place of the gods, where the gods never dream of going. Even Huskin Repps, the most fastidious of men, who was laid up if he heard a false quantity and who had never mingled with a crowd or rubbed shoulders with the proletariat in his life, did not hesitate for a moment, now his duty was plain before him. There was no need to say, "Be British," to any one in our circle. The old spirit of those men who conquered India and laid hands on all the fairest portions of the globe was awake in us again, reincarnated, as it were, in our ultracivilized bosoms. They had fought for plunder. We were fighting for art. But it was the same old spirit which prompted us.

We went away from the Parthenon, undefeated, to buy camp stools, thermos bottles, meat lozenges, and sticks of chocolate. Professor Repps bought, also, a tweed cap with flaps that could be folded over the ears, and Lady Burnett, a man's mackintosh coat. The morning might be inclement.

CHAPTER VII.

It was inclement.

The dawn broke gray and lowering, with a yellow tinge in the atmosphere and a damp threatening of rain. I was on my feet early and tapped my glass.

It was going rapidly down. At first this fact appalled me. I thought of Mrs. Lascelles, of Professor Repps, exposed to the fury of the elements on the greasy pavement of Mug Street. The gallery entrance to the Parthenon was in a side slum off the main street. Lady Burnett could take care of herself. She had once roughed it in Abyssinia. The others were mainly men, and I didn't care in the least what happened to me. But Mrs. Lascelles! The professor!

I looked out of the window. A soft rain was beginning to fall.

At this moment my telephone sounded, and I hastened to the receiver. Jasper Trent's roar sounded through it and told me that he had been in communication with Repps as to the right hour for our assembling in Mug Street. He, Trent, had suggested four o'clock in the afternoon, but the professor, who, it seems, had had wind of an extraordinary crowd for the gallery, was urgent for a much earlier hour. One o'clock, the professor said, was the latest. It was essential that we should be there in "a solid body." Would I, therefore, be in Mug Street by one? This would mean six hours and a half of waiting, but it couldn't be helped.

"Mrs. Lascelles can never do it," I said into the receiver.

"She says she will!" roared Trent. "She has got a camp stool and is sending out to buy a pair of jemimas."

"Noble woman!" I thought. "One never knows what these thistledown creatures are capable of."

"I'll be there at one," I said.

And I sat down, like the camel, to eat for a desert journey.

But before I had finished, the telephone bell rang again. This time it was Professor Repps, speaking from the British Museum in a piercing soprano.

"I have conclusive evidence that one o'clock won't do for our assembling!"

he cried. "An immense crowd is expected. To be sure of the front row, we must be in Mug Street by ten-thirty."

"Mrs. Lascelles!" I cried.

"I'll brave it out," he replied. "I'm taking a box of proteid biscuits."

"No, no! Not *you!* Mrs. Lascelles!" I exclaimed.

"She is buying jemimas and will be there by ten-thirty."

And he rang off with extraordinary abruptness, I thought.

It was now raining quite heavily, and my heart was beginning to sink, when I bethought me that this miserable condition of the weather might turn out to the circle's advantage. For it might deter people, not moved by our high ideal, from coming to Mug Street until the last possible moment. Perhaps no one besides ourselves would be there before the day was well advanced. We should have a horrible time, no doubt; but, at any rate, we might not have to endure the prolonged and dreadful press of, perhaps, Hebrew humanity. We might have the pavement almost to ourselves, and might be able to get in by the narrow doorway that led to the steep gallery stairs without being almost trampled to pieces by the wrong people. For the wrong people would be in full force to see "Sally Eliza." There was no doubt about that. With Pug Bullen, Tottie Willoughby, and Sol Israel Isaacstein in the boxes, I knew, of course, what we had to expect in the gallery.

About ten o'clock I put on a stout suit of Harris tweed, a pair of brogues, a mackintosh coat, and a soft hat—I couldn't bring myself to the wearing of a cap on such an occasion—filled my capacious pockets with sandwiches, biscuits, and a flask of the best old brandy, and set out on foot for Mug Street. I didn't take an umbrella, but carried a thick stick of the blackthorn type.

When I reached Mug Street, I saw a sight which genuinely moved me. Mrs. Lascelles and Professor Repps were already there, pressed closely against the shut door of the gallery entrance, as if ready to burst in directly it should be opened. Mrs. Lascelles held her camp stool folded over her left arm, and a small string bag containing edibles over the other. On her feet were the jemimas, and she was clad in a black waterproof and had a black scarf tied over her hat. The professor wore a thick overcoat with the collar turned up, worsted gloves, and the cap with flaps turned down over his ears. Raindrops nested in his round, black beard, and a thermos bottle and a box of proteid biscuits bulged out of his wide pockets. On his refined and almost prim face, with the fastidious lips and the critical dark eyes, there was an expression of ferocious determination. He looked like a fanatic as he stood with one foot on the stone step of the door, but I had never before admired him so much.

There was not another soul about in Mug Street. Only a tabby cat was visible in the distance, crouching in a squalid doorway over a wet, dead mouse.

Our greetings were almost emotional. We pressed each other's hands in silence, but our faces, I think, were eloquent.

As time passed on, other members of the circle turned up, until we were a compact little crowd of some twenty to twenty-five intellectuals. Lady Burnett, Jasper Trent, Eustace Delminius, Professor Simeon Jenkins, Johnnie Dean, they were all there, with a few devoted ladies who worshiped Ariadne, and several young men who cared for the things which matter.

As time wore on, and no one else appeared, we began to suppose that the report of a crowd which had reached Professor Repps had been grossly ex-

aggerated. We had eaten two little meals; Mrs. Lascelles had long since sunk exhausted upon her camp stool, tea time was drawing near; and not a creature outside the circle had put in an appearance. True, it was raining heavily and persistently. We were all practically wet to the skin. But, nevertheless, this marked absence of the public was strange and almost ominous. Not even a policeman had thought it necessary to roll up in order to regulate us. We might just as well have been comfortably at home for all the good we were doing in Mug Street, yet not one of us complained. Even Professor Repps, whose beard was now matted with wet and whose cap had totally lost its original gray color and looked like a shrunken, black pudding, said never a word. I could not help admiring the stuff in the man and realizing how great may be the forces of the soul hidden underneath a prim, and even, at times, almost old, spinsterish exterior.

At five o'clock we had our tea out of the thermos bottles, and Mrs. Lascelles ate two meat lozenges and took a sip of brandy from my flask. Six o'clock struck—seven o'clock; the circle was still by itself. Mrs. Lascelles had closed her eyes and was leaning with her head against Professor Repps' wet knees. The rest of us pressed together for human warmth and bodily support. Conversation had long since died out among us. We merely lived on by will power for the opening of the gallery door, kept up by the now almost certain knowledge that we should have the front row to ourselves and should be able to direct the jury assembled to give a right verdict on the work of Jock Jonesmith.

At a quarter past seven, two young ruffians of unmistakably East End appearance, with large noses, crinkly black hair, and protruding lips, swung round the corner of Mug Street, walked

impudently up to the circle, and immediately began to jostle it.

At seven twenty-five Mug Street was a solid mass of the wrong people, struggling, fighting, making determined rushes for the gallery door, heads down, shoulders forward, fists clenched, jowls protruding. At half past seven it was—the word must be set down—it was hell.

It is difficult to judge accurately of values in the midst of imminent, personal danger, but I should think that practically all the impecunious pugilists of London were numbered among that crowd. Need I say that the circle suffered? I hardly know what happened. It was like being in the falls of Niagara, only worse, for there was nothing fluid about it, though whirling force there was, together with deafening uproar and the most violent movement of which the human mind can conceive. All the statutes of the boxing ring were ruthlessly broken. Hitting below the belt was the rule rather than the exception, as poor Mrs. Lascelles, Professor Repps, and, indeed, all the circle knew. Even the savate, hitherto, as I understand, a mode of attack considered peculiar to the French nation, was brought freely into place. There were now some policemen on the scene, but they were totally powerless. The East End dealt with them faithfully, while the main portion of the boxing and bruising confraternity led, as I learned afterward, by a well-known local heavyweight called Pedlar Pieckmann, devoted their undivided attention to us.

The issue could not be long in doubt. From the moment when Mrs. Lascelles' hat was torn off her head and Professor Repps' overcoat was reduced to half a pocket, a couple of buttons, and a square inch of velvet collar, the game was up, as I heard some one say, in strictly metaphorical language. In the very height of the conflict, when Pro-

fessor Simeon Jenkins, Delminius, Lady Burnett, and others of the circle had long since totally disappeared, when all our thermos bottles, brandy flasks, biscuit boxes, et cetera, had been ground to atoms under the charging feet of Whitechapel, and when I, for one, was beginning to see Catherine wheels and unknown groups of stars dancing before my nearly bunged-up eyes, the gallery door was suddenly opened or gave way before the determined onslaughts of Pedlar Pieckmann and his adherents. I was conscious of a frantic movement; the back of my head caught a doorjamb; I was forced furiously upward by a press of seething, unwashed humanity.

I remember trying to be honest—the moral sense is strangely persistent in some of us—and feebly throwing one and sixpence in the direction of a small opening which I judged to be the gallery pay box; I reached a height, the back of the gallery; and was then flung down a steep descent, bounding and rebounding from the spines of backs of seats. Finally I landed on my hands and knees in a narrow space at the edge of a precipice. Miraculously, as it seemed to me, I was in the front row of the gallery of the Parthenon Theater. When I realized this, I hauled myself up, hanging on to the narrow, curved ledge in front of me with both hands, and sank down into the lap of some one, who said:

"Where the 'ell are *you* a-comin' to? You got nice manners, I *don't* fink!"

I was reposing on the bosom of a well-known "Bantam" from Shore-ditch.

Somehow, I shall never know how, I managed to squeeze into an interstice beside him from which I had an excellent view of the house. When I had collected myself and fastened the two ends of my collar together with a pin, which I fortunately found in the lining of my Harris tweed, I looked

round for the circle. Not one of them was visible at first. But as my eyes, ranging over the rows upon rows of Whitechapel faces, male and female—for feathered females there were in mobs—grew accustomed to the semiobscurity, I perceived one countenance which I recognized; familiar I cannot call it. At the extreme back of the gallery, Professor Repps was leaning sideways against the wall, wedged in among a dense throng of standing pugilists, wiping the streams of perspiration from a face which resembled a futurist painting with one hand, and trying to fasten a waistcoat from which, evidently, every button had been forcibly removed with the other. He, as I learned subsequently, was the only one of the circle, excepting myself, who assisted at the first night of "Sally Eliza." The rest knew of what occurred in the theater only from the professor's and my report of it, mine necessarily much fuller than his, since I had a good view of all that occurred, while he only caught, as it were, broken glimpses over the shoulders and under the arms of the bulky bruisers who surrounded him.

When I had recovered some equanimity after my horrible experience, and was able to breathe deeply once more, I endeavored to detach myself, mentally, from my uproarious companions in the gallery and to take a calm and discriminating view of things below me. The upper boxes and dress circle I could not see, as they were directly under me, but I saw many rows of stalls and all the boxes. As I watched, the stalls filled up rapidly. In them I perceived a few decent-looking and quietly dressed men, who, no doubt, were dramatic critics. Two or three of them were accompanied by well-dressed women, their wives, I suppose. I also saw a few women who came in unaccompanied and who had little books and pencils in their hands. These, I have reason to believe, were lady jour-

nalists, and I have nothing to say against them.

But what of the rest of the audience?

The circle had feared, and had fought against, the presence of the wrong people in Ariadne's theater, but when fearing most and fighting hardest, we had surely never conceived that people could be so wrong as those who poured into the Parthenon that evening, many of them being greeted with stentorian applause and catcalls from the gallery.

I don't know who most of them were, though some of those around me sought to instruct me by such cries as: "'Ere's our little bit of all right!" "There goes old Ma Parsons! Three cheers for old Ma!" "'Ow's yerself, Boy Bert, an' 'ow's yer Missis?" "Blimey bit if it ain't the Lucky Trickster! Caps off for the Trickster!" "There's Sunshine Jine with a new boy! Gawd sive old Sunshine!" and the like.

I gathered, however, by bits of talk from my neighbors and by my own close and tragic observation, that they were well-known publicans, pawnbrokers, pugilists, bookies, music-hall stars at that moment out of an engagement or taking a holiday, boxing promoters, and the like, with their women-kind, legitimate and, I fear, illegitimate.

The appearance of most of these personages was devastating. The men, such of them as were in evening dress—many were not—wore colored waistcoats; frilled shirts ornamented with enormous studs, gleaming with stones which I suspected to be false; turned-down or possibly celluloid collars; made-up white or yellow or even mauve ties, bought, apparently, to "match" the waistcoats. Not a few "shot" their cuffs as they swaggered into the stalls, or stroked their enormous and oiled mustaches with thick fingers on which glittered diamond rings. Their countenances were mostly bold studies of the mass. But some were of the British-bulldog species, with pug noses, enor-

mous jaws, large cheek bones, small eyes, and big, hard-looking, round heads, with low foreheads, ornamented with streaked-forward strands of sticky hair.

The women who accompanied these worthies I must be excused from describing lest I seem to be adverse to the sex. I will merely say that they were remarkable, far too remarkable, to be in place in the Parthenon Theater, where the "note" had always been a subdued, a "piano" note, and where intellect, even in the feminine sex, had been looked for and invariably found. Not one of the ladies whom I gazed down upon from the gallery had, probably, ever even heard of the British Museum; not one, I am quite positive, had ever been there.

Until close upon eight o'clock the boxes remained untenanted, and the attention of the gallery was eagerly fixed upon them, while nuts were being busily cracked, bananas stripped of their mottled skins, oranges sucked, and mysterious bottles drained dry. Peppermints spread their pungent odor abroad upon the air. And a small instrument called, I believe, a "fuzzy-wuz" or "Whitechapel tickler," was playfully used to keep the more sedately inclined portion of the audience, myself included, from "going to by-by."

Just before eight, there was a sudden roar of applause mingled with shrill cries from the women, and many people stood up. Mr. Pug Bullen, accompanied by two females, had entered box A, next the stage. I stood up with the rest, not, I need hardly say, to do honor to Mr. Bullen, who from the front of the box was ducking to the audience, but to send a passionate glance of sympathy toward Huskin Repps, whom I caught a glimpse of, with his sensitive face thrust forward, his round beard resting on the broad shoulder of a typical heavyweight, and his dark eyes almost protruding from

his head in an effort to see what was happening. As I looked, shouts of: "Good old Pug!" "Three cheers for old Pug!" "Give it 'em, Pug!" and similar exclamations from all parts of the house enlightened him as to the reason of the uproar, and I saw a quiver of exquisite pain pass over his delicate features. The man's cup was full! I knew it and turned away, just in time to see Tottie Willoughby, the male impersonator, accompanied by Conk Lutkins, who, as I afterward found out, was a famous female impersonator of uncertain antecedents, come swelling into Mrs. Lascelles' box.

Miss Willoughby was a formidable-looking woman with an immense fringe, in which was entangled the sort of tiara the fairy queen wears in a Drury Lane pantomime. She had the attitude and manner of a determined, even an aggressive, man, but was attired in an amazingly low-cut dress of vermilion satin profusely embroidered with heavy gold bullion and trimmed with tassels of gold. She wore long gloves of vermilion kid.

Need I say more about her?

Her companion, the female impersonator, who was saluted by the audience as "Curly Conk!" "Kent Road Conky!" and "'Ello, Queen Elizabeth, 'ow's yerself and the kiddies?" was a tall, impudent-looking man, with a bulging eye and a protuberant bust, who wore elaborate evening dress, with a coat cut in to an evidently steel-clad waist, and who swayed to the applause which greeted him with an easy familiarity which struck me as the crude acme of supreme vulgarity.

Poor Mrs. Lascelles!

As Sol Israel Isaacstein, whom I shall not describe, rolled into his box, accompanied by his wife and his lustrous offspring, a hidden orchestra struck up a popular tune.

For the first time in her manage-

ment Ariadne had debased herself to the lowest theatrical taste in music!

Then the curtain divided, and "Sally Eliza" developed before my eyes.

There is no need for me to attempt to analyze "Sally Eliza," and I have no intention of doing so. The annals of the British theater are open to the curious, and the matter is sufficiently recent to be within the recollection of a very large portion of the public. It is not for me, a playwright myself, and even one who has endeavored to write a play suitable to the talent of Ariadne, to praise or to condemn a work which might possibly be supposed by the ignorant to have stood in the way of my own. I will merely state a fact which, in my view and in the view of the circle, sums up the whole matter.

"Sally Eliza" was a popular success.

Pug Bullen liked it; Tottie Wiloughby liked it; it was approved by Sol Israel Isaacstein and his entire brood; Conk Lutkins thought it "fine." This I know, for I heard his powerful voice, like a strong, dramatic soprano trumpeted through a megaphone, reverberate through the theater with the word at the close of the performance. The gallery "took it to its bosom." Knowing who was in the gallery, it is surely unnecessary to say much more. The play had every low and common feature which makes for popular success. It was like the banana among fruits, the kind of thing which is appropriately sold from a barrow and devoured publicly on the pavement by the teeming vulgar in search of sustenance with a flavor that suits the slum. It reeked of the people like boiled cabbage. It was the peppermint among bonbons. Vinegar seemed to drip from it onto steel knives. One slipped upon it as upon orange peel in the gutter.

In short, it was what the public wants.

This was terrible enough, but far more terrible was the popular success of Ariadne.

When she first came on, to be received with an uproar of coarse applause in which whistling and catcalls were prominent, I did not recognize her, and, for one instant, supposed that some popular favorite had been engaged as a member of her company. It was only by remarks of my neighbors and then, almost immediately, by certain intonations, certain movements, by a certain carriage of the head, that I knew the woman before me must be Ariadne. Pug Bullen led the applause, gave the signal for it, I might say, when Ariadne shuffled in, blowing her nose in a manner indescribable, which at once took the fancy of the house. And soon the shout went up, "'Ere's Sally Eliza!" a shout which seemed to me, and, I doubt not, to Huskin Repps, to sound the death knell of a great career. Yes, it was indeed Ariadne, that frowsy, tangled-headed, dirty-faced, grim-handed, husky-voiced girl of the slums, the gin palaces, the boxing ring, and the fifth-rate picture palace, a girl who carried her arms akimbo, wore a feathered hat when she went out, cheap earrings, and a rabbit-skin boa, a girl without an *h*, and, worse, without an intellect or a desire for one, a girl without, indeed, either aspirates or aspirations, whose one aim in life was to have a husband who was strong enough to knock her about and clever enough to "down" his rival in the boxing ring. It was tragic to see such a woman as Ariadne in such a rôle, but the greater tragedy was this: she played it as if she were born for it, with a zest, a gusto, an apparent high-spirited enjoyment of it, which almost paralyzed my senses. At first, I tried to think that I was merely witnessing a clever tour de force, an exhibition of real acting as opposed to the mere exploitation of a powerful personality, but as the evening wore on I was forced to another and very painful conclusion.

Ariadne—I felt it in my very depths

—was reveling in the part of *Sally Eliza*, reveling like a creature released from whose back a burden had rolled away and fallen into an abyss. There was no intellectuality here, and she was glad of it. There was no gray matter here, and she was at ease. Everything here was crude, indelicate, mindless. The passions of the illiterate were laid bare like a row of prominent teeth. The commonness of the mob, of those swarming millions from whom we of the circle instinctively shrank away, metaphorically holding our noses, was enthroned, and Ariadne was happy in the enthronement. It was incredible, and yet I could not deny it. The impossible was accomplished before my eyes.

Ariadne was enjoying "*Sally Eliza*" as much as, or more than, the audience was enjoying it; she was enjoying it like one of them.

The curtains met on that most hateful of all things in art—a popular triumph. There were vociferous cries for the author. Instinctively, I stood up and leaned forward over the ledge of the gallery, straining my eyes.

"Jock! Jock! Jock!" barked the audience in unison. And I found myself barking with them. "Jock! Jock! Jock!"

But no Jock Jonesmith appeared. Only Ariadne came forward and said, still in the tones of *Sally Eliza*:

"Jock Jonesmith ain't in the 'ouse! But I'll tell 'im yer likes 'is ply!"

There was a roar of laughter, a shout of applause, and Ariadne retired. Immediately afterward, from the wings a foot and a short length of leg were protruded and shaken hard at the audience, producing another shout.

This was the finishing touch to the awful evening.

When at last I crept out of the theater the clouds had cleared and the stars were shining. As the mass gradually melted away into the shades I saw a

broken-down figure leaning against the wall of an adjacent public house. It was Huskin Repps.

I got him home to the British Museum, somehow, and left him there, crouched in front of Ariadne, as Venus draped. Then I went back to Jermyn Street. I took out my play and looked at it for a long time. My brain seemed numbed. Huskin Repps, I knew, had lost the ideal of his middle life. But I was still a comparatively young man, and youth is stubborn. I was a playwright, too, which Repps was not. My play lay there before me, witness to my long agonies of intellectuality in the service of Ariadne. Was she indeed doomed, as I knew Repps thought she was? Was she destined to pass the rest of her life in the Augean stables of popular success? Or was there one who might rescue her? The morrow would show. I was too exhausted to do more than wonder just then. But I remember laying my hand on my play with a gesture which was like a mute prayer.

CHAPTER VIII.

That night I made up my mind what I would do on the morrow, and so decisively that I slept well, as men do when they have shaken hands with their manly resolution.

I woke refreshed and calm. My face, it is true, was discolored by the events of the previous evening. I had taken a scratch or two from the professionals of the ring; over my right eye there was a protuberance the size of a thrush's egg. But my head was clear, my brain cool, my resolution unabated. I was able even to eat a moderate breakfast.

Some papers lay on my table. I did not open them lest I should see the flaming accounts of the hideous and detestable triumph of the previous night. These might have unnerved me. I needed to have all my weapons in or-

der, sharpened and bright. Nothing which might possibly dull them must be allowed to come near me. I attempted no intercourse with the circle by telephone or otherwise. Its members were probably prostrate, both mentally and physically. At any rate, for the moment, they could do me no good. It were better to ignore them. I felt lonely, but brave in my loneliness.

Toward eleven o'clock I walked down to Marmion Street and used the dryad's head on Ariadne's black door. A Scotchwoman came. I asked to see Miss Marshall. I was told that she was not up. The excitement of the preceding night had tired her. She was still asleep.

"Eh, mon, but it was a braw night, the night for Miss Marshall!" said the Scotchwoman.

I made no comment on this astonishing dictum, but left a note which I had written at home and brought in my coat pocket in case of eventualities.

"Please give this to Miss Marshall directly she wakes," I said. "And tell her I shall be here again punctually at four. I know she will see me."

Without waiting for another word from the woman, I turned on my heel and walked calmly away.

Exactly at four I was there again, this time with my manuscript neatly rolled up in my hand. While at home a new idea had come to me, which had led me to bring my play.

When the door was answered I said: "I have made an appointment with Miss Marshall. She is at home, no doubt."

"Yes, sir. Miss Marshall is in——"

"That's well!"

I stepped firmly into the hall.

The woman, I thought, looked rather more Scotch than usual at me, but she seemed overawed by my manner, and shut the hall door.

"I'm not pair-r-r-fectly certain that Miss Marshall will see ye!" she said.

"I'm perfectly certain that she will!" was my simple and manly answer. "Where shall I wait?"

"In here, sir," said the woman, looking rather subdued.

And she showed me into a little room off the hall, where Ariadne studied and, I supposed, wrote those masterly analyses of plays which had so much impressed me.

I had seen this sacred room once, but had never sat down in it. I did so now, resolutely holding my play on my knees.

The room was simple, but deeply impressive, the room of a thinker, even, it seemed, of a scholar. I saw a large, plain writing table covered with neatly arranged and important-looking papers, docketed, tied with blue tapes; many pens, big sheets of blue blotting paper, masses of butcher-blue stationery, a statue of Minerva in marble presiding tranquilly over all. On the wall were books, the classics which suited Ariadne's temperament, "perhaps a peculiar one." From my mahogany chair with carved claws of a lion I perceived the works of Strindberg, of Ibsen, of Hauptmann, of Sudermann, Schopenhauer's essays, Tolstoy's "What Is Art?" Gorki's "Asile de Nuit," Barker's "The Voyage Inheritance," a tremendous array of intellect and deep thought. But another book caught my eyes. It lay on a sofa face downward and open. My curiosity was aroused. I got up and went toward it. Bending down, I read the title, "The Naughty Monk, Rasputin. His Life Faithfully and Minutely Recorded by the celebrated William——"

Before I could read any more the door opened and Ariadne stood before me.

Her hair was "bobbed!"

For a moment that was all I saw. Then she came forward briskly.

"Hello!" she said.

After an instant I answered, "Hallo!"

"What have you got there?" she added.

"I've brought my play."

"What for?" she said. "My dear chap, let me tell you something: 'Sally Eliza' will run for a year, perhaps two years."

"No, no!" I ejaculated. "Impossible!"

"But it will! Haven't you seen the notices?"

"I shall never see them!" I answered strongly.

"The papers are all over me, simply all over. The *Times* says that I've brought the reek of Whitechapel across the footlights. The 'Pink Un' declares I've done more——"

"Ariadne!" I exclaimed in my deepest bass.

"Well, what is it?"

"You quoting the 'Pink Un'!"

"And why shouldn't I?"

She stretched out her arms.

"My dear boy, I've found my freedom at last! Here, sit down."

I sank down between the mahogany claws. She threw Rasputin on the floor and curled up on the sofa.

"Were you there last night?" she asked, leaning forward.

Her face, between the bobs of her hair, looked quite different from usual, sharp, shrewd, almost gamin, I thought. Her eyes had lost their deeply reflective expression and sparkled with cockney mischief. Even the timbre of her voice was changed. The sonorities had sunk away from it. It was lighter, it was full of satirical notes.

"I was there."

"How on earth did you get in?"

"By the gallery door."

"And the rest of them?"

"They were swept away, except the professor."

"Which one?"

"Huskin Repps."

"He was there!"

"He stood at the back of the gallery."

"Poor old bean!"

"Ariadne!"

"Poor old fruit! But it was all his fault."

"His fault?"

"Why couldn't he leave me alone?"

"Leave you alone? But he made you!"

"Made me a sham!"

"A sham?"

"Made me a façade like the façade of the Parthenon. I was only a frontage on the street till last night, all columns and broad steps and pediments and architraves and Gawd knows what! I was false British Museum till last night, and he made me it."

I was so astounded that I was literally unable to speak. My voice seemed to dry up in my throat.

"Look here!" she went on confidentially. "I'm not really an intellect. I'm a natural talent. See the difference? I'm a gift, not a brain. He couldn't see that. He would have it that I was a great brain. I came across him when I was an ignorant girl, and he said I looked like a muse. I was in melodrama then, on the other side of the water, but I didn't let him know it. I said I was 'resting.' I was as poor as a rat, and I saw my chance with him."

"You don't mean to say——"

"What! Old Repps?"

She broke into a laugh.

"Not a bit of it! My dear, he's a spinster in trousers! No; it was all art with him. He introduced me to the highbrows. He brought me books. He took me—my Gawd!—to the British Museum. He talked to me—oh, how he talked! And I sucked it all in. I thought it was my chance to stand out from the rest and get cackled about among clever people. And I went for it for all I was worth. And I got there. I never made big money, but I got a big name. I stood for intellect on the stage. The highbrows were all over

me. I made love to the professors, and they helped me along. All the authors who can't get a popular success brought me their plays. Then I got backed."

"Backed! Who backed you?"

She shut one eye and put her forefinger near her nose.

"Never mind! But it wasn't the professor! That put me into the Parthenon Theater. And there I struggled along with the highbrow stuff the big public detests. What do you think's been lost in the Parthenon Theater?"

"Lost?"

"Money!"

"I don't know."

"Something like five thousand a year, take one year with another! Well, it couldn't go on. But I was afraid to make a change till I was just pushed to it."

"Who pushed you?"

"What about the backer?"

I was silent.

"Even then I thought I'd been a frontage on the street for so long that I was afraid to show 'em that there was anything inside of me. That was why I got you all in that Sunday evening. Remember?"

"The supper from the Ritz?"

"Ah! That was *his* idea."

"Whose?"

"What about the backer?"

Again I was silent.

"Well, after supper it went *his* way, and then I was all in. I never looked back after that. And I've got there. I've showed 'em what's inside of me, and they jolly well like it. No more Corinthian pillars for me! Walk up, walk in, and see the bar parlor! No more eating of husks—why, his very name's Huskin!—but have a good warm and a jolly-good drink and go home with a bellyful!"

"Ariadne!" I started to my feet.

"Well, what's the matter? Are you

like the rest of 'em? Can't you stand a bit of the truth?"

"Tell me the truth," I said. "Who is the backer?"

"What about Augustus?" she replied.

"Augustus Transome!" I cried. "It was Augustus Transome who got you to put on 'Sally Eliza?'"

"Got me! What do *you* think?" she replied. "Why, he wrote the old thing."

"Augustus Transome is Jock Jones-smith!"

"Ra-ther! But even I didn't know it at first."

"Well, I'm——"

"That's it, my boy! Be natural for once and tell us you're damned!"

Instinctively I made for the door. Those weapons of mine were blunted in my hand. I had meant to unroll my play, to read the new, intellectual parts, to dwell on the gray matter. I had thought to recall Ariadne with my play to her better self. But now——

At the door, however, I turned, moved to do so by a recollection.

"But—but——" I stammered, "your letters!"

"My letters! Whatever do you mean, boy?"

"Your analysis of my play! Your analysis of 'Sally Eliza!'"

"Oh, old Murryan wrote those. He did everything to keep up the highbrow legend of me. He bolstered up the façade. I only copied 'em out. I went by him in most everything. When I acted, he stuffed all the bowbow intellectual rot into me. He was the wonderful Ariadne—excepting the production and the costumes and all that. Young Fanning looked after those."

I had heard enough, and I laid my hand on the doorknob. As I did so Ariadne called out from her sofa:

"I say, I like you, boy! The circle hasn't quite done for you yet. Now, you take my tip. Scrap all the intellectual rot in your play. Leave the

situations as they are, work up the comic bits, stuff in plenty of laughs and some more spooning, and then bring it along to me again. But scrap all the intellectual rot! See?"

I believe I bowed. I know I was far beyond speech. I opened the door, held it, and looked back.

Ariadne had picked up "The Naughty Monk, Rasputin," and was eagerly turning over the pages, evidently to find her lost place.

My tale is nearly at an end. I gathered the circle together. I told them who Jock Jonesmith was and who Ariadne's backer was. They were horror-stricken. But when I explained to them the nature of the change in Ariadne, the mental and moral change, even the physical change, they were appalled.

"Her hair bobbed!" wailed Mrs. Lascelles, who was stretched upon a sofa with her poetical head swathed in wet bandages by doctor's orders. "It is the end!"

And, like Hezekiah, she turned her face to the wall.

"She says she is really a bar-parlor," I said. "And that *you*"—I turned to Huskin Repps—"made her a sham. She mentioned the word façade. She spoke of columns, architraves, pediments——"

"My words, my words!" murmured Repps. "She had never heard of a façade, of an architrave, till she met me!"

"Had she ever heard of anything till she met you?" asked Lady Burnett.

"Perhaps not! Perhaps not!" said poor Repps. "But she had a forthright brain and——"

"That's just what she denies!" I exclaimed, moved to interrupt him almost in spite of myself. "She swears she hasn't got a brain. She said to me, 'I'm a gift, not a brain.'"

There was a moment of dead silence. Then Jasper Trent roared the circle's epithet over the grave of Ariadne:

"She's a popular success. *Requiescat in Pace.*"

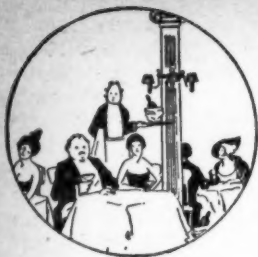


THE PARK IN WINTER

AUTUMN died here austerely, for no flame
 Wrapped the gray trees in glory. Winter came
 Unheralded of banners. The cold sky
 One day is whiter, as when ashes die
 On a lone hearth; and suddenly there stands
 Each black tree, reaching up with fleshless hands,
 A pitifully stark and naked thing,
 As though to clutch that sky for covering.

Here Nature lays her last reserve aside—
 The leaves that were unlovely when they died;
 Scorns the grave reticence of wood and field,
 Yet stands mysterious; even now revealed
 More to the spirit than to mortal eye,
 As this strange pageantry of death goes by.
 The park in winter! Now is given to man
 To read her utmost secret—if he can.

MARY BRENT WHITESIDE.



The Old Crowd

By Charles Hanson Towne

Author of "Autumn Letterers,"

"A World of Windows," etc.

HUGH PRENTICE got the shock of his life one evening at a dinner party, a shock that frightened him in his singularly happy bachelorhood.

The woman on his left turned to him, looked straight into his eyes, and, instead of saying, as he fully expected, "Why don't you marry?" cruelly and distinctly asked, "Mr. Prentice, why *didn't* you marry?"

You could have knocked him down with the olive fork. The fatal moment had come when the realization was borne in upon him that he was forty! Yes, that wretched and much-to-be-dreaded age was his, and he had thought he looked at least six or seven years younger. If his hair had receded a little from his forehead, no one drew attention to the fact. There is no line of demarkation between youthful buoyancy and stupid middle age. You don't jump a hurdle and find yourself on territory quite different from that upon which you have been gayly cantering. No, indeed.

Hugh turned to Mrs. Garrison, flabbergasted; and for once his hostess, who had been observing them, saw that he was rattled and unable to reply. There was a terrible moment when his lips were sealed as definitely as though a bandage had been placed over them. Then he blurted out weakly:

"Why, do I—do you mean to say I—seem that old?"

"I didn't say you seemed, or even

looked, old," Mrs. Garrison replied swiftly, toying with her salad and sipping her champagne. Bert Rollins had a well-stocked cellar, thank Heaven! "I simply asked you why you didn't marry."

"It was the 'didn't' that hurt," Hugh couldn't help confessing.

Mrs. Garrison looked straight into his eyes again; and her glance this time, he noticed, took in, also, his definitely receding hair.

"So you men hate it as much as we do!" she said. "Who would have guessed it?"

"Of course we do," Hugh quickly said. "It isn't a matter of sex. It's a matter of sense. Who wants to grow old?"

"Who wants to look old?" Mrs. Garrison flashed back, smiling in her triumphant early thirties.

"Do I look old? Tell me the truth, Mrs. Garrison. Any friend of Lily Rollins' can say anything she wants to me. I'll be a good sport." And he tried his best to laugh. He needed a little more champagne before he heard her answer; so he gave Meadows one of his famous smiles. In a jiffy some of the imprisoned joy from a fresh bottle was bubbling into his glass.

Mrs. Garrison sipped again from her own glass, as if she, too, needed fortification, much as a judge needs it before he passes sentence on a wretched prisoner.

"I haven't an idea of your age, Mr.

Prentice. You might be thirty"—Hugh's heart missed a beat through gladness—"or forty-five." It missed a beat through horror. "Of course, I'm taking into consideration this dreadful New York life. It keeps people young in one way; it ages them frightfully in another. You all look so—how shall I say it?—blurred and so tired to us Westerners. You ought to have married, you're such a nice fellow. Why didn't—I mean, why don't you?"

Hugh could feel the perspiration coming out in beads on a forehead that he now felt was limitless in its dimension. Meadows, who looked upon Mr. Hugh as one of the family, deftly filled his glass again.

"It's a long story, almost a serial. I'll tell you some time," was all Hugh could get out.

"I like serials. I'm following two at present. Can't I begin yours soon?"

"To-morrow, if you wish. Will you lunch with me at the Ritz?"

"That's good of you; but shan't we go to a quieter place?"

"Just as you say. I rather like the excitement of the Ritz, though."

"Oh, you confirmed New Yorker! All right, we'll meet there, then."

He could have killed Lily Rollins for injecting this new element into her dinner party. Why couldn't he have had one of the comfortable evenings he was so accustomed to, with the old crowd? This Mrs. Garrison, she was good to look at; no one could deny that; she was mighty clever, too; but, damn it, she was so brutally frank, and she messed things up so confoundedly! Who *was* she, anyhow? Where had Lily picked her up? "One of my oldest friends from Idaho," he now remembered she had said over the telephone when she asked him to come to-night. But Lily was everlastingly telling you about some "old friend" who turned out to be a casual acquaintance picked up

on a journey—some one who interested Lily but no one else in the old crowd.

He looked down the circular table at his hostess. How well she looked, but every day of her thirty-seven years; and before to-night—up until the last ten minutes, in fact—Hugh had never thought of Lily as anything but a girl. Why had Mrs. Garrison come and spoiled everything? She would disillusion them all before the evening was over. Bert looked older, too; maybe the stock market had gone wrong. And the Mordaunts had little lines around their eyes which he hadn't noticed before, and so had Mrs. Ellsworth. He looked again at his hostess. That smile of Lily's! No one could resist it. Men and women alike were under her spell the moment she expanded her mouth into one of the most beautiful smiles mortal had ever beheld. She could gather around her any group she chose—army officers, sculptors, poets, painters, brokers, actresses, bohemians, or society leaders. All she had to do was to smile; and they came in a rush to her hospitable house.

But though she had a genius for getting new people about her, she was loyal beyond words to her old friends. She never shook any of the old crowd for the smartest and cleverest newcomer. Like waves of the sea, some of the stand-bys would recede for a time, when Lily was busy with fresh comrades; then, in a rush, they would return in great battalions to the shore of her doorstep.

She knew exactly what Hugh was thinking now when he looked over at her; and she guessed, in part, what Sally Garrison had been saying. She heard the luncheon appointment made; but she was used to hearing such engagements fixed up by Hugh.

Lily gave her ravishing smile as a signal for every one to rise. The men would follow in a few moments. "Don't stay away too long from us," she al-

ways said to them at this moment of separation, and then laughed at her own bromide as she floated into the big front room, a lovely swan before a beautiful, variegated troupe of followers.

Bert and Lily Rollins belonged to that new aristocracy which has arisen in America since the passing of the eighteenth amendment. They served liqueurs after dinner! And, miraculous to tell, there was a choice of three. It was unbelievable, unless you knew the Rollinses as well as Hugh knew them. Preparedness was their watchword, preparedness in everything; and not only was the cellar of this town house well stocked, but the place down on Long Island was filled with rare vintages against many a dreary year.

No golden chartreuse, however, no laughing champagne was the lure that led to the Rollins home. Had it been as dry as Sahara, Bert and Lily would always have gathered a flock of interesting folk around them. And though "Herby" Metrick's wit might have languished a bit, or, rather, though his audience's appreciation might have waned on arid evening, he would have come just the same to caper in his conversation.

Herby was thirty-four. His widowed mother had recently married a man only a year Herby's senior.

"Some one asked me how I liked my new pa," he was saying now to Bert as he sipped his *crème de menthe*, "and I said he wasn't my pa—only my faux pas!"

Every one laughed; and Herby, though the joke was decidedly on pa and ma, was completely happy. For him, the evening was a success. One *not* like this, and he was made happy. People used to say of him that his life seemed to be one long series of dinners and dances; and when he was eighty it was predicted that he would be cavorting with the same old crowd

in the same old way. He stripped his wit so constantly, no wonder he had a sharp tongue. He'd do anything for a friend, except refrain from punning on a name.

"What was the matter with you to-night?" He turned on Hugh, whom he liked tremendously. "I never knew you to be so quiet, particularly at the end of the dinner. The new lady on your right would have been a sleeping Garrison in another moment."

"She woke me up out of sleep," Hugh quickly said, about the mirth, "and I'm grateful for that."

"You do look conscious—almost," Herby said. "For Heaven's sake, Hugh, buck up! The evening's young, and you've got to dance, and I've got some new charades, and—well, we must show Mrs. Garrison that New Yorkers have pep, though we all do look tired—all the men, I mean," he added gallantly.

Thus Herby babbled and bubbled on, as the men smoked and drank their coffee and sipped their liqueurs. He had a round, little face, and no one could possibly have guessed *his* age, Hugh thought. But then to be thirty-four was to be a mere stripling; and Herby was the type who would be a perpetual Peter Pan. That sandy hair of his would never change color. Yes, Herby was the eternal boy, devoted to everybody, with everybody devoted to him, scattering his affections over so much space that he never had time to concentrate. His one dissipation was laughter, and no party was complete without him. He romped his way through life, without a rival, without a peer; and his old jokes were as satisfying as his new ones. People settled back comfortably on divans and in easy-chairs when Herby came in, knowing *he* would make the evening go.

That is just how the women felt when he led the group of men into the drawing-room.

"Here's Herby," some one murmured. "Cheer-oh!" And there was that definite settling back as of queens when the jester used to appear. "Now make us laugh," the movement seemed to say.

"Shall I turn on the victrola, Lily?" Herby asked his hostess. "Or shall we suffer in silence to-night? Personally, I think general conversation would be a nice change," he added, looking knowingly at Mrs. Garrison and then at Hugh, who had come in and gone straight to his late partner at dinner.

"That wouldn't be a bad idea," Hugh said, turning. "Or how about some mind-reading tricks. You seem almost psychic at times, Herby!" laughing.

"How do you get that way?" Herby asked, pretending to be furious. And everybody laughed.

Except Mrs. Garrison. Sitting on the big divan between the two big, golden candlesticks that were so definitely a part of the room's furnishings, she looked bewildered. Hugh looked closely at her. She was as slender and graceful as a reed; her eyes must always have gazed upon beautiful things. They had that far-away look, as though they were accustomed to wide spaces; that look that plainmen and sailors have and a few dreamers.

"Tell me," Mrs. Garrison whispered to Hugh, who had now definitely come and sat down beside her, "why do you all laugh whenever Herby says something?"

"I suppose it's habit," Hugh answered. He liked Herby, and though he got a little peevish with him at times, the moment a stranger began criticizing him he wanted to leap to his defense. It was like a big family. They might fight among themselves; but no mere outsider could enter the quarrel-ring. "Besides, he is amusing, don't you think?"

"Not very."

"Gracious! You are frank! Or is this just your mood to-night?"

"And why shouldn't one say what one thinks and believes?" Sally Garrison asked as she puffed her cigarette and watched the smoke curl upward.

"Well, it doesn't always pay, that's all. I used to talk that way, but I got over it."

"Past tense again! Look out, steady there! It's dangerous to use those verbs, you know!"

"By Jove, but you are cruel! Haven't you any compliments in your bag of tricks?"

"I haven't any tricks. You New Yorkers have appropriated them all. There's nothing left for a poor little Idaho woman."

"How pathetic! But then I'm used to hearing my city run down. Don't you like us?"

"Not awfully well. The whole show is so empty and shallow."

"And I told her I couldn't go to a table d'hôte, because I'd sown my table d'hôtes!" It was Herby's voice, and the expected and much-desired laugh came from the others.

"You see," Mrs. Garrison said to Hugh, amid the shouts that went up, the cries of "Bravo, Herby!" "You think that's funny. I don't. And you all listen to it every night. You'll have charades next, and then the rugs will be ripped up, the victrola turned on, and you'll dance for a while. The taxis will be called, and you'll all go home and think you've had a lovely time."

"And we will have had a lovely time; as good a time as anybody else. But again let me compliment you on your brutal frankness! Aren't you having a lovely time?"

"Yes—and no. Now, why don't you laugh? That's as witty as anything your dear friend Herby has said to-night!"

"Say, we'll come to blows in a mo-

ment!" Hugh laughed. "If there's anything I hate it's a clever woman!"

"Because when they're clever they're twice as clever as men; that's it, isn't it? Herby can rage on forever about nothing! but as for us, we must just let ourselves be flirted with, played with, talked to, and stared at. I've been wondering why you didn't talk to that nice Miss Comstock over there. Herby rather neglected her at dinner. He talked incessantly to Lily; and you were strong for me, or thought you were."

Hugh looked across the room, where Elsie Comstock sat, rather apart from the others. Herby was doing a trick with a string, and Mrs. Ellsworth, the young widow, was adjusting it on his wrist, while Basil Kemp, the painter, and Wiley Mordaunt and his wife and Bert and Lily were watching the proceedings with interest. Somehow, every one seemed to have forgotten Elsie. She did look a bit forlorn sitting by the mirror. She had picked up a book and pretended to be glancing through the pages.

"Elsie doesn't mind," Hugh said in extenuation. "We do what we want to in this crowd."

"But she's so young and pretty, far prettier than I am; and yet there she sits, alone," Mrs. Garrison persisted. "I don't see why."

"We're all so used to Elsie that it doesn't matter. That's the naked truth, Mrs. Truth-teller! I thought you liked frankness."

"I do; indeed I do! But where a woman is concerned——"

"Ah! There you are! That's typically feminine! 'Where a woman is concerned'—the hedge you ladies all hide behind, the barrier you built whenever you are caught. But I don't blame you."

"And then you pull it—so! Now where's the knot?" Herby was saying, and shouts of amazement went up.

"Why aren't you interested?" Mrs. Garrison called over to Miss Comstock. "It looked like a wonderful trick."

"Oh, I've seen it before," the weary little débutante answered, half closing the book, but being careful to keep her finger in the place. "Herby did it last night at the Parsons'; in fact, he did it so often that I caught on to how it was done. I don't see anything in a trick after you've found out how it's accomplished, do you?" She came over and joined them on the divan. There was a strange tiredness about her movements, and on closer view she looked as if she had been out to a dinner party or a dance every evening for a month.

"Everybody has a bag of tricks," Mrs. Garrison laughed. "Particularly in New York."

"I'd a hoe once!" Herby cried, hearing this last remark.

For a moment no one caught the atrocious pun on Mrs. Garrison's native State; but when they did, there was the usual wild hilarity.

"You see, he can get away with anything!" Sally Garrison said to the room in general. "How wonderful it must be to become a perennial wit. In the slang of the hour, 'How do you get that way?'" And she leaned back on the comfortable cushions.

Hugh began to feel sorry for Herby, remembering his boast, immediately after dinner, that he would show Mrs. Garrison that New Yorkers had pep. But apparently the Idaho woman's remark did not cause him the least annoyance. He was putting a record on, a monologue by a comedian they had all heard dozens of times, and after he had done so, through sheer habit he pushed back the rug with his foot. The comedian's husky voice came out of the miraculous box, and it was only then that Herby realized that dancing wasn't to begin at once. He began then to make idiotic motions, as an accompaniment to the monologist's words.

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Hugh wondered if he was feeling his champagne—good old Herby, who couldn't stand a great deal, like so many people brimming with nervous energy.

Just as the comedian reached the end of his twaddle, Meadows ushered in the Lewises and the Murgatroyds, and the feminine side of each union kissed the feminine side of the Rollins union, while the men shook hands and more coffee was brought in and the expanded party glowed and warmed to one another.

"Well, well! Here's Herby again!" Murgatroyd shouted. He was one of those men who never speak; he always shouted. "I see you everywhere I go!"

"And I see you!" Herby answered. "Nothing on me, Murgy!" And Murgy laughed, as he was expected to do, and turned to Dick Lewis and said, "You can't beat old Herby, can you?" And then he lit one of Bert's best cigars, said yes, he'd take a liqueur, thank you—never drank like this, but prohibition would surely send him to a drunkard's grave if the government didn't look out. And *that* got a laugh.

Sally Garrison wondered why. "You all laugh at anything," she said to Hugh. "What's the matter with you? Is it the high tension you live at?"

"You're not having a very good time, are you?" Hugh couldn't help saying. "You're impaling every one of us on a pin, analyzing our broken, bruised wings, studying our frailties, and comparing us shut-ins with your wide, open spaces. I know we must seem terrible to you, poor orchids that we are! But we have an awfully good time in this hothouse of New York. Don't we, Elsie?" turning for corroboration to the little débutante on his left.

"Yes, I suppose so," she answered. "I don't know where one could have a better time than here at Lily's."

"Where else do you go?" asked Sally Garrison.

"From one house to another. It's

a dinner or a theater party every night, in winter, and then week-ends all summer. I love it. We all know one another so intimately, it's great fun. I was at the Palais Royal the other evening."

"Where's that?" asked Mrs. Garrison.

"Oh, how should I know? You just go in a taxi!"

"You resent the intrusion of any new person into this old set, don't you? I think it's rather mean of you myself, for it's great fun to sit and watch and listen!"

Hugh didn't know whether she was being sarcastic or not. It was hard to read Sally Garrison. Of one thing he was sure, however: she didn't altogether like the old crowd, and it was a shame Lily had let her come. Meadows was showing in half a dozen more people. Soon the room would be packed, for Lily loved a jam, and the dancing would begin, and before you know it, it would be supper time—the Rollinses were always feeding you—and a few would go upstairs for bridge or poker, and then it would be time to go home. He'd feel like the dickens to-morrow, but what of that?

"Now this charade is a word of five syllables." It was Herby's insistent voice rising high above the heads of the guests who were crowding around him. Herby had worked his way toward a big alcove on the left of the drawing-room, which always served as a stage for an impromptu theatrical stunt. "I'll need only one other person with me. Elsie!" he called out. "Where are you, Elsie Comstock?"

And Elsie rose wearily from the divan and went to do her little best to make Herby's charade a success.

There was silence for a brief moment. Elsie could be seen in the alcove, shaking hands with Herby, who wore a top hat and carried a little bag.

"Good morning, doctor," she was saying in a tired, monotonous voice.

Silence again. Every one expected something else.

"That's all," said Herby, turning a silly face toward his audience. "Can't any one guess?"

No one could. "Five syllables, you know!" Herby shouted.

Deep thought. Silence again. Then Sally Garrison, from the divan, said, "Metaphysician!"

"That's it!" yelled Herby in delight. "Don't you see? Met-a-physician! Good, isn't it? Who guessed it? Oh, Mrs. Garrison! Three cheers for Mrs. Garrison, the Idaho wonder! Hip, hip, hoor-ay!"

And he took off his top hat and waved it in the air.

"Good Lord!" almost whispered Sally Garrison. "Won't you take me to my taxi?" to Hugh. "And to-morrow, at one, at the Ritz? Good night, Lily," as her hostess came over to her. "I've got to get some sleep. How do you New Yorkers stand it? But it's been lovely. Thank you so much. What a jolly crowd!"

And she was gone. Hugh was a little sorry he had invited her to lunch with him.

The Ritz was crowded, for it was a bright spring day, and as every flower in the country was out, so every feminine flower in the city wished to show its pretty face.

Hugh sought Sally Garrison in the big lounge just off the main entrance. Yes, there she was, in a fetching hat and frock, looking, as women will, entirely different in the daytime; not a whit more plain nor a whit more beautiful, but beautiful in another way.

"I'm sorry if I'm a minute late," he apologized, "but the subway was jammed. How good of you—"

"You're not a bit late. I got here on purpose ten minutes beforehand. What

makes it so fascinating?" looking about them at the whispering, chattering, moving conglomeration, every woman as smart as only a New York woman can be, every man immaculate.

They got a table on the balcony next to the railing, where they could see everything. But this was not due to chance, as Sally might have thought. It meant a telephone call by Hugh and something else.

"Was I terribly rude last night?" was Sally's first question when they were seated.

"Oh, no! We enjoyed you! It was refreshing to hear your frank talk."

"Now you're the sarcastic one," she answered. "I can't complain, though; I deserve it. I got to thinking on the way back to my hotel how very critical I'd been, and my conscience smote me. I think I was cross because a young friend had telegraphed me that she couldn't reach New York for another two days, and I'd expected she would be here with me all the time. But I'm not going to talk about myself; it's your serial that I want to begin. Yes, that's splendid—hors d'œuvres, kingfish, crisp dandelion salad with egg dressing, cheese, and coffee. What could be nicer? Now, Lucullus, for the story!"

Hugh had done a lot of thinking since the evening before. Had Sally Garrison but known it, her remark to him about his failure to marry had cut him to the quick. It shook his pride. He was forty, it was true; but—damn it!—he was still eligible.

"How am I looking to-day?" he smilingly asked her.

"Oh, so well that I'd forgotten what I said last evening. Without flattery, you don't look a day over thirty-five. Now are you happy?"

"Why, yes, in a way."

"You people all need a shaking up."

"Certainly you gave it to a few of us last night," Hugh laughed.

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"You've every one of you got a disease—old-crowditis, I'd call it. And it's the hardest thing in the world to cure. You're all like patients in the same ward. You resent it if any one else is wheeled in. I never felt so unpopular as I did last night. I've known Lily for years. Why shouldn't she ask me to her house? Have you people a monopoly on her? Are the friends of one's youth nothing?"

"I'd like to know, too!" Hugh answered. "And why shouldn't Lily ask not only you, but any one else she takes a fancy to. I suppose your friend will be coming next."

"And why not? She's an angel. You'd all adore her if you'd get out of your shells and ruts. I never saw a crowd that drew such a definite ring about themselves. And now tell me, why didn't you marry? I can't understand how you've managed to escape."

"I don't know why I should be telling you this." No opening remark in the nature of a confession ever pleases a woman more. Sally leaped with that joy only a woman feels when she realizes the power of her femininity over the mere male. "But you're a lot like Lily, and you know how she draws us all out. We call her the human poultice! But, seriously, I was engaged when I was thirty. The old story—a silly quarrel and then a year of frightful dissipation to try to forget the fool you've made of yourself in losing a wonderful girl. A mighty poor serial, isn't it?" He laughed; but she was quick to notice a little break in the attempt at mirth.

There was a moment of intense silence, as there is bound to be after a man has thus revealed the tragedy of his life. He had told it lightly; but she knew that underneath the lightness there was deep feeling, a note of pathos and pain. It was like seeing the tears of Harlequin after the show is over;

and no woman is unmoved by the spectacle of a man's emotion.

"You care yet, don't you?" Sally Garrison said. Her voice was low and charged with sympathy.

"Of course, I care. A man doesn't go in for a solid year of dissipation after a broken engagement unless he does care. Maybe that's what aged me and I never knew it. Until last night, whenever I looked around at the faces in our crowd, I didn't see any changes; and perhaps they were kind enough not to see any change in me, Lily and Bert, at least, I mean. They knew me during the crisis. We're like a big, loving family, you know."

"If—I hardly know how to put it—if it were so that this girl came back into your life, how would you feel?" She wondered at her daring to say such a thing.

"What do you mean? She married. I heard that. What a mess I made of it all! I can say to you, as I've said to Lily many a time, that Harriet, with her wit, her charm, her loveliness, is the only girl I've ever cared for and ever will. And I'll never marry until I feel the same way about some one else. But I know I won't. I can't seem to get over it. What's the matter with me?"

"You're all the nicer for it. But may I say something very—well, you may think me cruel again. Perhaps I'd better not."

"Oh, do. I'll be game once more." He suddenly felt as if he had known her always.

"Well, you're coddled too much. This crowd you go with takes your youthful tragedy for granted, and they don't want to lose you. Can't you see that? They never let you forget it. And you call them 'the old crowd'—and Lily and Bert are the only ones you've known any length of time. The rest all came as late as five or six years ago. They allude to your broken engagement every now and then, as if

they'd known you when it happened. That's done purposely. To be frank, I hadn't been in New York a week before I had heard all about you and your disappointment."

So he had become a sort of legend, a bit of New York folklore! Ten years is a decade, after all, and a long enough time to lend a colorful background to any shattered romance.

"Well, I never!" was all he could get out. Then, "So you knew all the time, even when you asked me last night why I had never married?"

She looked him straight in the eyes, and Idaho honesty was in the look.

"Yes, I did. I wanted to see if you'd tell me. I confess I was curious about you. You looked so—interesting." She knew any man would be flattered by this. "And I couldn't see how you'd escaped entanglements even after the great grief that had once been yours. In fact, I wondered why there hadn't been a reaction, a swing of the pendulum, a catching of you on the fly, as they say. Do forgive me. I have thought it so strange that one like you, after all Lily told me, could settle down into a comfortable existence of celibacy."

"Oh, it's easy enough for a man to do that," Hugh said, snipping a bit of cheese. "New York is a glorious place for bachelors. I should say it was their Mecca. They make a fuss over us here. We're motored everywhere; we're wined and dined, and all that's expected of us in return is a little honest flirting and a book or a theater now and then. But why go on? You know as well as I do what it must be like." He smiled; but he noticed that she didn't smile back.

"Imagine an Idaho man, any Western man, talking that way!" she said. "It sounds like hothouse life. It sounds as if Burbank had grafted—yes, grafted, again! You're all so false and artificial here! You never feel for a moment

that you are losing the best of life; that all this is a fraud and a cheat!"

"Don't say that. The train gets used to tracks, you know, and it's only the exceptional locomotive, after all, that slips off once in a while. If I knew where Harriet had gone, that would be different. She has never written me one line since we parted; and I haven't the least idea where she is. I was a fool, an ass, an imbecile, call me anything you wish; but I had to stay here and work and——"

"And flirt when it suited you. Whom do you flirt with in that set of yours? A lot of married women, I'll bet!"

"Yes, because it's safe; and, oh, don't think I'm a cad!—because it's expected of us!"

"All women expect to be flirted with, just as they expect to be taken to luncheon by nice men every now and then. Why shouldn't they?"

"Why not, indeed?" Hugh laughed. "And it's so very pleasant and easy for the men! We get all the thrills without any of the responsibilities."

"Don't talk in that New York way, I beg of you! You think you're with one of your crowd! How do you know I'm safe?"

"I don't. That's what lends to-day a piquancy I haven't experienced in ages."

"Thank you. A woman likes to feel that she's still attractive to all men. But watch out. I'm from the Far West, you know. *That* isn't so safe!"

"I'll take a chance."

So he hadn't lost his joy in thrills! How novel it was to be sitting here opposite some one different, some one he had never known existed until a few brief hours ago.

They rose. "I'm not a dangerous type at all," she said. "You see, my husband——"

Hugh stood perfectly still. "You're married, then? I thought you were a widow."

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"Of course I'm married."

"God bless you!" he couldn't help crying out; and the color came back into his cheeks.

She laughed. "Don't be so sure you're safe. Everybody isn't as harmless as I. You're all dining with me at my hotel on Saturday. Didn't Lily tell you?"

All that Lily Rollins had to do was to telephone any of the old crowd, and a "party" was swiftly arranged. There were about thirty of them who never went anywhere without the others. They were like a group of suburbanites, only they were forever languishing on the heaving bosom of Manhattan. One dinner inevitably led to another; therefore the round of gayety knew no end. When the Mordaunts weren't entertaining in their somewhat overdecorated apartment on Park Avenue the Speedwells were holding forth on Washington Square; and in the summer the men would meet on the same train Friday afternoon or Saturday morning, all bound for a common weekend. They joined the same golf clubs, of course, and they carried running accounts for themselves and wives, covering their bridge or poker losses and winnings, and there would be a settling-up blow-out sometime during the winter, when the one who had made the most would be the host. A private room at some hotel was always the place chosen; and then there would follow a theater party, with supper after that. Life was one long song and dance, literally, for this crowd who had plenty to spend and spent it lavishly on one another.

The morning after her own dinner of ten, Lily called up about twenty of the "gang," at Sally's suggestion, and told them that they were all to meet at the Gotham for an eight-o'clock dinner which the lady from Idaho was giving. It was to be most informal. Sally

simply wanted to show her appreciation of the crowd by giving a party in honor of her old friend Lily, whom she hadn't really seen since they were girls together at St. Margaret's; and, as she wasn't stopping long in town, she'd have to give the dinner on Saturday or not at all.

Everybody accepted, a thing so unusual in New York that it only proves again the clannishness of this particular bevy of people.

Hugh, who lived near Bert and Lily, had arranged to stop by for them and go uptown in their car. Even on the little byroads that led to the boulevard of an engagement, he didn't care much about being left alone. Inevitably he jogged along with these old friends, and they would have a cocktail before they started, against the possibility of none when they arrived.

Lily had been out on a feverish shopping expedition, and had come home so late that they were delayed in starting. But Bert and Hugh didn't mind. They sat at their ease in the big drawing-room, where so many festivities had been held, waiting for her; and Hugh couldn't help remembering how, in this very place, he had first met Harriet Daffney and fallen in love with her under a certain lamp near the great French window. To-night the room bore that look of eternal calm that the sea so often bears, when it is difficult to visualize rough waves and stiff gales. Yet here stormy times had been had, riotous evenings of long delight. He thought of the peace of those days ten years back, when he had been so briefly but completely happy, and how he had plunged into the maelstrom afterward, glad of any excuse to forget, eager to join any revel with the old crowd, just so that the memory of Harriet was veiled. He had spent one year abroad but he was only too happy to get back home and join the crowd again. Poking around Europe by oneself isn't an

enviable occupation, unless you happen to be a student in search of the wisdom the old countries keep locked in their hearts. He realized that since then he had been seldom alone. The nervous energy one needs in a city like New York was his in abundance; and less and less he dallied with books and picture, but went in with gusto for gayety and an ephemeral form of happiness. To drift on this city tide was the easiest thing in the world to do, particularly when there was always so much companionship. But surely life was meant to give him something better than this. What would he be ten years hence? In the processes of change some of the old crowd would inevitably move away or be gone forever; and it was so difficult to make new friends after one had reached a certain age.

That was it! Every one of them had reached a certain age, and a neatly trimmed hedge had been planted around them, boxed them in, and almost shut off the view of the highway. Now and then they could see a carriage dash by; but they'd never think of its stopping at their door. A big, glorious world was somewhere out there, but they refused to step foot in it. They preferred the indolent ease of their tiny garden, their little province that seemed all-sufficient, that they had built up with such care and in such selfishness of spirit. Would they never open the gate and wander out, or, better still, let some one else wander in?

Well, Sally Garrison had wandered in, and it was as if a stone had been thrown at a window, shattering it. That is what she meant to Hugh, at any rate—the rock that broke him to pieces. And he himself could mysteriously see the fragments of his spirit lying all over the garden. Was he in love again? Not at all; but he had the pleasant, secret joy that every man knows when, at forty, he realizes his capacity for new sensations; when he finds he can still

take steps, however timid, toward the flower of a possible romance.

If her parting remark to him a few days before had left him numb, he knew that was a good sign, rather than a bad one. He had not yet crossed the Rubicon, thank Heaven! But he was in immediate danger of beginning the journey, from which, as from death, there was no returning. Why groan over the past and let others groan with him in neat accompaniment, attuned to his every mood? Why not get out, break away, cross the hedge, not mind the skyscraper just over the line, and find out for himself what was really in the world? But he couldn't do it. He loved only Harriet; and every other woman could go hang.

"I'm ready!" It was Lily's voice that woke him from his dreams. Bert was one of those old friends you didn't have to talk with; and Hugh realized that he had been as good as alone all the while they were waiting for Lily to appear.

They must have been half an hour late, but Lily seemed curiously unconcerned. "Sally won't mind," she said once or twice; "and you know how far from punctual any of the old crowd is!"

There was a little room outside Sally's apartment where they were to leave their things; and as they entered this they could hear laughter from the main room and silence again. A woman's voice was saying:

"He was the unlucky kind, you know, who bought stock in a corkscrew factory, and then prohibition came in!"

More laughter; and then Herby's strident tones rising above the hilarity, as of old:

"She is better than I am! You were right, Sally! A new standard has been set! Hooray for Mrs. Thomas!"

The cheers were repeated. Evidently every one had arrived except those in the anteroom, and undoubtedly the cock-

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tails had been passed, perhaps more than once.

"I told you she was lovely, didn't I?" It was Sally speaking. "And bright? Wasn't I correct, good people? Isn't she welcome in the old crowd? Isn't she worthy, and won't you let her in? I'm sure Lily will say yes when she comes."

There were loud acclamations; and so thrilled were the trio on the outskirts, as it were, that they did not move. They stood listening, as though they were for the time being inhabitants of another hemisphere, having the wireless bring them news.

The voice of the newcomer, Mrs. Thomas, again could be heard. "Mr. Metrick belittles himself. I shouldn't say he had witty degeneration of the heart yet!"

And then laughter—and plenty of it, like a cascade, rippled through the room.

Hugh couldn't believe his ears. He did not know whether he was dreaming or not. That voice! Never was there another like it. Yet it was impossible. Sally's friend couldn't be—

He looked at Lily; and something in her eyes made him see that the whole thing had been arranged. She had known, too, and that's why they had been late. They wanted Hugh to make an entrance at the psychological moment. It was as plain as day now. What an evening it was going to be! Good Lord! How could he ever cross that threshold? Ten years and then this! Why didn't the floor open and swallow him? And did she know he was to be there?

Sally could be heard saying:

"I do wish the others would come. The dinner will be spoiled."

That was the cue for Lily. "Here we are!" she cried, and projected Hugh ahead of her into the room, where all the old crowd were gathered about, and in their midst was a radiant-looking creature, yes, the same alluring, flower-

like girl Hugh had not seen for ten long years. Their eyes met in one terrific moment. He saw that she was as much surprised to see him as he was to see her.

Silence! Would no one ever speak? Hugh recalled, in that blinding instant, a poem he had read years ago, wherein, at the time of farewell of two lovers, one of them forgot forever the words they said, but remembered in detail the pattern of the rug, the fluttering of a bit of paper, and other such trivial things. Now, in this moment of meeting again, he was conscious at once of nothing save that a cocktail glass had tipped over and a few drops of the precious liquid were dripping from the tablecloth. He knew Harriet stood before him, as lovely as ever, with that humorous twinkle in her eyes, those lips that betrayed the spirit of mischief within her. And just as the imp of a distorted sense of humor had been the means of separating them years ago, now the good fairy of laughter would bring them together again.

It seemed an eternity before any one spoke. Then he heard Harriet say—and still it was like a dream—"Hugh! How glad I am to see you!"

"Harriet!" was all he could get out. And then, because the thought was so definitely in his subconscious mind, he blurted out, clumsily frank, "Are you still married?"

That broke the tension. Every one laughed so hard that he lost her answer, if there was one. But Herby Metrick, who could always make his voice heard above any clamor, however loud, yelled, "No, you poor boob, of course she isn't!"

They gave him a drink then; he needed one if ever a man did. And then they went in to dinner.

While the wedding march was being played there was a craning of necks and a gentle whispering all through the

little chapel where they were to be married.

"She went out to Idaho to stay with her friend, Mrs. Garrison, and try to forget their foolish little quarrel," Milly Mordaunt was saying to Mrs. Eggleston. "She married a ranch man, in desperation, and he mercifully died after three years!

"She was eight years younger than Hugh; that makes her thirty-two now.

But look what the open-air life did for her complexion and eyes! She doesn't look a day over twenty-five, does she?"

"No," put in Sally Garrison, who couldn't help overhearing. "And as for Hugh, look what happiness has done for him! He might be thirty to-day."

If only Hugh could have heard her! But he was so absorbed in Harriet that he forgot everything—even, momentarily, the old crowd.



QUESTIONNAIRE

I WENT into the woods to make a song,
Wherewith to buy
My love a gown.

*So sang a poet and a lord of rhyme,
Making the chimes of spring
In autumn chime.*

I fled the woods and brought flower words along,
Made of a sigh,
Freshly to town.

Fresh and wood-wild, they harbored something strange
In every note,
Something flower-shy.

*Singing of beauty, careless of renown,
Veiled in a cloud, to fling
Silver rain down!*

Hushed is the song. Was it lacking in range?
Needed my throat
More of the sky?

Or was it a lack—a lack of the town?
Who could be wrong,
I, the town, or the song?

WILLIAM GRIFFITH.



The Man Who Never Came Back

By Marie Van Vorst

Author of "Big Tremaine," "Mary Moreland," etc.

THEY were talking of the Power of Mind; of Force and Destiny, of the Potentiality of Concentrated Thought. Mrs. McLane, the hostess, said that she was, perfectly sure Desire and Will could work miracles. Miss Moore, the girl who was staying in the house, and just recovering from a nasty fall in hunting field, agreed with her.

Said Miss Moore, "I am convinced that if one wants a thing strongly enough and is willing to *concentrate*, one can draw a person from across the world."

Tommy Hereford, who had the reputation of being the best host on Long Island, looked over at Miss Moore from the corner of the divan where he sat enveloped in a cloud of smoke.

"I did not know you were that kind, 'Cinny,'" he said. "I'll give you a salary if you keep certain persons away!"

"Oh Tommy!" exclaimed the girl, "you make fun of everything! Don't you believe in anything?"

"That's a dangerous question," said the best host on Long Island. "I believe in pretty women, good food, sunshine, and out-of-door exercise. How is that for a credo, Miss Grayson?"

Hereford looked over to Miss Grayson, who sat with a background of Mrs. McLane's pink hyacinths behind her. She was a Red Cross nurse who had just received her dismissal from the service and had come down to Long Island to celebrate her liberty over the week-end.

"I think," said Miss Grayson, "that it is the creed of most healthy men, if

they would only confess it, but I do believe in the Power of Mind or whatever you choose to call it. Last summer I saw a terrible example of it when I was on my vacation in the Italian Alps."

"Fine!" exclaimed Hereford. "Tell us about it. I've got so little mind myself that it is a satisfaction to think somebody's will is working to good purpose."

"I don't know whether you'll call it Will Power or not," said Miss Grayson. "When I have done, tell me *what* you think it was!"

"I took my fortnight's leave last summer in a little mountain town of the Italian Alps," Miss Grayson began. "It was a frightfully expensive place, but a good friend of mine over here had made me a generous present and I added my pay and so went to Plessiny."

"I forgot to say, Miss Grayson," Tommy Hereford interrupted, "that I hold money to be the greatest power in the world. You may have all your mental suggestions; I'll take a bank balance!"

Miss Grayson went on, "Before I begin, I am going to ask you all to promise to take the story just as I tell it, and, when I have finished, not to ask me any questions."

"That's perfectly easy to promise before you begin," said Mrs. McLane, "but it will not be easy to keep, perhaps."

"However," said Miss Grayson, "I shall have to have your promise, first, because it is a sacred matter to me. I shall so disguise the place and the names of the people that none of you possibly

can know." She looked from one to another of them. "You all promise?"

"Fire ahead, Miss Grayson!" said Tommy Hereford. "We are all among friends and we stand by each other and you. Fire ahead!"

Miss Grayson told her story unbrokenly and smoothly as though she had prepared it beforehand and loved it.

"Plessiny," said Miss Grayson, "is the dearest place I ever saw in my life, full of poetry and charm, and is old, so awfully old."

"I hope," Mrs. McLane said, "that when I shall be awfully old, I shall be full of poetry and charm!"

"It is just under Mont Blanc and its range of mountains"—Miss Grayson, as she talked, seemed to see all she described—"and the valley is all white and pink with the scattered houses of Plessiny town. At the foot of the mountains, tiny, ancient villages, the color of ripe mushrooms, creamy and brown, cluster and hang above the rushing rivers, swollen by the melting snows, the yellow harvest fields around them. I could see all this from my window," Miss Grayson said, "and I loved to study the valley and look slowly up along the mountain's bare sides to the glaciers and the snows that creep down and then on up to its spotless peaks. And, oh, the air!" Miss Grayson seemed, as she spoke, to actually breathe it again. "The air flowed down like wine and filled the cup of the Aosta Valley."

"Please keep on talking of the wine-like air," said Tommy Hereford, "it is delightful in these days of prohibition."

"My first night in Plessiny I noticed an Englishwoman, whom I shall call Mrs. Manners, across the restaurant. The room was full of profiteers. The women were dripping with jewels; the one next to me had been a laundress, they said, and she had on a tailor dress and a double rope of pearls and a large diamond cross."

"You see, Miss Grayson," said Hereford, "she never could have demonstrated herself into that exclusive restaurant by Will Power alone. It's money, little, useful, filthy lucre!"

"I looked away from her," Miss Grayson went on, "to a table in a corner, and the woman there was looking, too, at the profiteers tribe. Our eyes met; she seemed much amused."

"Snobs, both of you!" said Hereford.

"In Italy, it is a compliment to people to stare at them. They like it, they are flattered by it, and it proves to a woman that she is admired. I never took any interest in the custom until I saw Mrs. Manners; after that I never looked at any one else in the restaurant. At her table were her husband and another man, but she looked only at the other man and talked only to him; and you couldn't blame her, for her husband drank outrageously, and when he was not drinking he was discussing the wines with the head waiter. Mr. Manners was heavy and red in the face, puffy under the eyes, and awfully quiet. The Manners were English and, after a day or two, their table was like an English home-table with all sorts of unexpected delicacies on it. I don't know where they ever got them! Worcestershire sauce and chutney and big vases of mountain flowers! Where in the world they found Worcestershire sauce I cannot imagine, for in Plessiny you couldn't buy a bottle of ink or a spool of thread."

"The march of empire!" murmured Hereford.

Miss Grayson smiled. "Yes, England seemed to have come with them, to be there with them in the little restaurant four thousand feet above the sea level; and they had beautiful teas on the balcony of their rooms, for Mrs. Manners had the porch curtained off with thin, brown curtains and a real tea table, and sofa, and chaise longue, just like a home room!"

"She was really over thirty but she did not look a day more than twenty-five, one of those tall, slender English blondes with a great deal of manner and a great deal of style. Her face was calm and singularly patient," said Miss Grayson. "She looked to me as though she were waiting for some one she was awfully fond of, to return to her and I wondered whom she could be waiting for, since her husband was there by her side, and the other man too, and she was perfectly absorbed in him."

Hereford said: "She was waiting for England to go prohibition. From what you were saying of her husband I should think she would vote for it!"

"It is quite a custom in little Plessiny to wander out late after dinner along the village street which leads into the highroads and out of which the mountains seem to rise straight up, and it is a custom to stroll about in the moonlight and starlight or in the cool shadow when there is no moon."

"Miss Grayson," said Tommy Hereford, "I am afraid this is going to be a scandalous story. But you've settled my next summer's plan for me. A wine-filled valley with strong-minded couples strolling about in the moonlight!"

"The first night," Miss Grayson said imperturbably, "Mrs. Manners and the other man went together far down the road between the wheat fields, and, at the bend of the road by a little shrine, they disappeared out of sight. Meanwhile Mr. Manners was over in the café drinking and smoking good Egyptian cigarettes—when there were no cigarettes to be found in Plessiny." Here Miss Grayson lit a fresh cigarette and smoked it with appreciation.

Tommy Hereford said, "I think you're awfully hard on Manners and have been from the start, Miss Grayson '*Les Maris ont toujours tort!*'"

"I don't know whether or not he was listening to the music," said Miss Gray-

son. "He was very gloomy and very red in the face and I don't think he spoke to a single person while he was in Plessiny. I did not like to talk to any one myself; I only wanted to rest, but I could not help being interested in the drama going on before my eyes.

"Up the mountainside, a little way, is a chapel to the Virgin called '*La Guérison.*' I did not climb to it," smiled Miss Grayson. "I had been doing all the climbing I wanted on the French front, and I drove ignominiously up to the chapel with a driver who had been a guide. Henri was a character in Plessiny. He had climbed pretty nearly all the big mountains, including the Himalaya."

"'*Signora, si,*' he said to me, 'the mountain is like destiny. If you hear the call you must go, and if it wants you to come back, you do.' Henri walked beside his horse and I sat in a little carriage which had been built over eighty years ago and I should say from the way it was hung had never been repaired!"

"'*Signora, yes,*' he said, 'there are fine climbers in all countries, but English people are the greatest of all. They are like the mountain itself, strong and silent, and when the mountain keeps some of them forever in the ice, I feel it is only calling home its own.' Henri walked on. '*Signora, yes,* the English who are at the Signora's hotel are great climbers, they are going to climb *all* the range, but, Signora, there is a terrible risk for a man to climb when he is not perfectly sober,"

"There," said Hereford, "another hit for poor old Manners! I have taken a fancy to that man."

"Mrs. Manners was alone at lunch the next day and I could look at her to my heart's content, and I did as she sat facing the mountain, absolutely fascinated by it. You would have said she studied Mont Blanc as though she were following all the paths with her soul."

Mr. Manners and the other man had gone with Henri's brother on their first climb, and Mrs. Manners ate hardly anything and drank only soda, real English soda. I can't imagine where she ever found it, you could scarcely buy a bottle of beer in Plessiny!

"I thought I never saw a more womanly woman than Mrs. Manners! After uniforms and girl policemen, and girl camion drivers, it was a blessed relief for my eyes to rest them on just a woman! Mrs. Manners was like the picture of a girl of old times, a girl to put on a magazine cover and sell out the edition. She looked like a woman to hold the hand of a man she loved or to play with a child. She wore mauve or lilac a lot, and, as she sat there with the big, glass window open behind her and the bare peaks and the mountain for a background, she was too lovely for words. I dare say I was shameless in my admiration, but she smiled at me and, after coffee, came and sat down with me at my table.

"I see you are Red Cross," she said. 'I have no end of Red Cross friends in England. I should have liked to go in myself. I am not very strong and my husband forbade it.'

"She seemed frail when I saw her closer. Just a lovely thing to be petted and spoiled and loved! She said that her husband and Captain Starling were going to do all the Mont Blanc range. It was a passion with her husband, Mrs. Manners said, but his friend had taken it up only lately. I remarked that it left her much alone, but she said she did not mind at all, for she liked to be alone and think, and I knew she meant she liked to be alone and dream!

"She told me that her husband and his friend were in the same regiment and that they had been fighting all the time together, side by side, and neither had got a scratch, not a scratch! There were few men who could say this. I said that they both bore charmed lives."

"Oh, I hope they do! I hope they do!" Mrs. Manners said.

"Both men came home next day and at dinner the other man sat with his back to me and I could see the husband, gloomy and dark and red and puffy around the eyes. He drank a fearful lot and I noticed that the other man never drank anything but water or a sort of lemon pop, real English lemonade in a brown bottle—how ever they got that lemonade in Plessiny I don't know! Mrs. Manners never spoke to her husband and I really think he was too far gone to be very talkative or to care whether any one spoke to him or not. But Mrs. Manners and the other man talked together all the time happily. He never took his eyes off her and I don't wonder!

"The men stayed in Plessiny a few days and every day she seemed to grow happier, lovelier, and she wore the most beautiful clothes, pictures, every one of her dresses were. I can't think how she ever got them up there, for the tourists were only allowed thirty kilos of baggage. Her evening dresses were very low indeed. She never wore any jewels and in the daytime just soft, fluffy gowns with big picture hats that looked like shades over a light, for her face was positively starlike those days. When there were no excursions she seemed radiantly happy. In the evening, Mr. Manners would always go over to the café and nearly fall asleep on the table, and Mrs. Manners and the other man wandered away into the moonlight down the road to Aosta and were lost in the glory.

"I worked it all out for myself after I had seen the faces of both men pretty plainly. They were simply fighting for her. That was what they were doing, fighting against each other, playing against fate and chance and life and death for her. I don't know at all if the husband was conscious of this or how conscious any man can be who soaks in

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alcohol. But the other man knew. They had fought side by side in France, breast to breast, arm in arm, waiting to see who would fall or who would come home. I believe they fought it out 'without a scratch,' as Mrs. Manners had said, and they had to go on fighting now, till one or the other fell or did not return.

"La Cré is a little group of peasant houses under the shadow of the mountain itself, and Césarine, a fine, old woman with a black handkerchief on her head and long golden earrings in her ears, milks her cows in the cellar and serves fresh milk in a low-raftered room to the tourists. It is a picturesque little wayside place; the fields, bright with wild flowers, sweeping up to its doors, and the mountain casting its shadow over the roofs and the bronze-like balconies.

"Henri told me as we drove along that his brother had never seen such reckless climbers as these Englishmen! They seemed to be seeking to risk their lives on every occasion; if there were the choice between a dangerous path and a safe one, they took the dangerous one by preference, and where other people went slowly, they tried to rush their guides.

"*'Signora, si,'* Henri said, 'my brother is a brave man full of courage, but he feels that his life is doubly in peril with these English gentlemen, and the drunkard is as brave as the other. The drinking gentleman hardly speaks at all and is a very quiet man, but the other one is full of good humor and spirit. They are great sportsmen. *Signora, si,* my brother is in love with them both!'

"But it was only when I was taking my tea under the mellow rafters of the low room that I learned that Mrs. Manners and her husband and the other man had come out to La Cré that same morning to lunch at Césarine's on polenta and cream and had gone off to

wander in the forest. I was sorry to be there; it looked as though I were tracking Mrs. Manners. There was no one in sight and no sound but the rushing river under the windows and the cackle of Césarine's hens and the mooing of the cows in the cow shed under the room where I ate. As I walked out a little bit later, I went very carefully because I did not want to meet them if I could help it. However, I came suddenly upon Mr. Manners asleep under a tree on the pine-covered ground. He slept peacefully, his head on his arm, and he did not look at all inebriated, but more like a boy quietly asleep in school. His face seemed worn and sad and I felt sorry for him, and I could not help but wonder then if he would not have been different if other things had been different, too! Far down the road skirting the mountain on my way home I saw the other two walking side by side. Mrs. Manners' hands were full of mountain flowers.

"The Englishmen did not climb for several days. It seemed that Mr. Manners was not very fit and they were preparing to make a very, very difficult ascent which had been done only three times before and which no one had done at all for eighteen years.

"The peasants were harvesting in their grain and the wheat lay low on the fields like floods of amber. Over the valley were patches of yellow wheat and up the mountainside until the wheat met the snow, and over the wheat as it lay low on the earth, the wild flowers grew in profusion. There were long, trailing white, pink, and lavender morning glories, and straight, up-standing blue cornflowers, and, of course, poppies everywhere. The country grew more rich and marvelous every day, till it seemed as if the land ached with beauty and the pulse of summer beat through it like a song.

"In the first one of the small villages across the stream where the oiled and

polished balconies against the white walls of the houses hung like bronze, there is an old, old mill. On one side, the giant mill wheel turns with the vigorous waters of the cataract and the valley is filled with the whirl of the falling waters. I used to love to go to this mill and the solitary and lonely village, deserted as all the little villages are in the hot August days when the peasants are in the mountains with their cattle and their flocks. Sometimes I found the mill wheel silent and I heard only the drip, drip, drip of the waters from the stones.

"On this special day as I was walking home I listened and there was no sound. The mill was still. I went back to town by the village way. There were only ducks and chickens pluming their feathers and pecking in the empty street. The shining, oak doors were shut and barred. Rich with the provisions for the winter, the sheds were loaded down with fresh-cut wood, and the lofts, sweet and fragrant with the hay. I took the little field path to the highroad, and as I turned to take it, there, by the mill, near the mill, in the shadow of the mill, were Mrs. Manners and the other man, standing close together. They were just like one figure, for he was holding her so closely in his arms. I can see it all now," said Miss Grayson, "the somber, cool shadow the mill wheel cast, and the sunny, little village. It was very beautiful and still, and I am not sorry that I saw it, or even that I witnessed their embrace; it seemed part of the nature around us and of the summer and its fruition, a complete expression of love, and there was something about it very, very sad to me. It seemed as though they were bidding each other an eternal good-by.

"That night at dinner Mrs. Manners was as pale as the dead, and it was a curious thing, but her husband was perfectly sober. He looked quite a different man when he was sober, and I

saw, because this time he faced me, that he had a lot of energy and power in his face. I won't say it was a dogged obstinacy, but a look of determination, and he talked all the time. Indeed he was the only one who said anything except that the other man responded to him in monosyllables. Mr. Manners seemed the master of the moment, as though he felt they were going into the last battle and he was going in *fit!*

"He said to the head waiter, 'No wine to-night, just Perrier and plenty of ice.' They all drank Perrier, and I don't know where they ever got it in Plessiny, for no freight came through at all from England or France!

"The next afternoon I went up again to the chapel of the Guérison and this time I walked up along the winding road above the valley and close alongside of the mountain until I could see all the small, mountain villages and pink and white Plessiny, lying far away like the petals of flowers scattered on the fields and only the thirteenth century tower of the little church pointing up, sharp and clean, close against the mountainside. They had built the little chapel to the Virgin in gratitude for the miracles of healing.

"The legend of the Virgin of Healing is particularly pretty," said Miss Grayson. "I stopped one day to look over an old stone wall at the marigolds, roses, and the tall poppies growing in a humble little garden, and to watch an old peasant woman with a yellow handkerchief tied over her head, a beautiful face, watering her flowers. Her only flock and herd, a white goat, munched the short grass at the edge of the garden walls.

"I am gathering a bunch of flowers,' she said, 'to take to my Virgin up on the hill.' Her hands were full of poppies and marigolds and pansies and she held them in their brilliant and varied colors against her worn, old breast. 'I call her my Virgin because my ancestors

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brought her in their arms a hundred years ago from Savoie, when they came back into their own country. They could not leave the dear, little Virgin behind, so my great-grandmother carried her in her arms, walking on foot over the mountain paths, back into Italy. The Virgin was heavy and seemed to weigh more and more as my great-grandmother walked on, and she had other things to carry besides, household things strapped upon her back,' said the peasant woman of the yellow handkerchief and the offerings of flowers, 'but, the signora has seen how bravely our women carry burdens!'

"I had seen them indeed! I had seen haystacks walking in the streets, for the women carry the hay for the winter home on their backs in stacks so high and so heavy that they entirely conceal the human figure, and with two tiny feet below the hay, the mass goes walking down the road.

"Up on the peaks,' said the woman of the yellow handkerchief, 'my great-grandmother stopped to rest and put the little Virgin down to rest as well, in a niche by the roadside and left her there while my great-grandmother went down to the nearest spring for water. While she was gone, there came down the road a poor, lame beggar on his crutches, but he was not blind as well as lame, and when he saw the little shrine and the niche on the rock, he prayed to the Madonna and he was instantly healed. He went away leaving his crutches, running down the road; and so,' said the woman of the yellow handkerchief, 'the legend goes, that between the time my great-grandmother left the Virgin there and went to the spring for water and returned, several people were healed and when she came back there was a little group singing the "Ave Maria" before her household Virgin from Savoie! So they made the shrine there and they call it "Our Lady of the Healing."'

"I went in to give thanks for some beautiful things that I had seen upon the French front and to rest and pray and, over in a corner under the Virgin's shrine, with her head in her hands, I saw Mrs. Manners praying. I slipped out very quietly so that she should not see me and I went toward the glaciers so that I shouldn't meet her, but finally when I went down toward the town I found her sitting on a rock by the roadside. Evidently she was waiting for me, because as I came along she smiled and put out her hand. We walked back slowly down to Plessiny and I saw at once that she wanted to talk to me as one woman wants to talk to another and so I helped her and I said:

"I saw you were praying at the Virgin's shrine. I am sure you were praying for the climbers.' They had left at dawn that same day to make the big ascent.

"Mrs. Manners stopped quite short on the road and looked at me. 'Oh, Miss Grayson,' she said, 'oh, Miss Grayson,' and she did not say another word except my name in her rich Scotch voice; then we walked on together and I am perfectly sure she had wanted to say to me, 'I prayed for one man—just for one man.'

"We talked about all sorts of things of no special interest, not about mountain climbing, and we never mentioned either of the two men.

"That night we dined together at my table and her back was turned to Mont Blanc. She did not follow the scars on the side of the mountains or the thin, hairlike paths leading up to the top.

"I had a delegation of the Red Cross people come up to see me the next day. Mrs. Manners lunched in her room. Late in the afternoon of the day when her husband should have come back, she asked me to walk out with her a little way on the road. I did so and went on, then, leaving her under a tree about a mile out. She was in pink and

white, not the least like a mountaineer, young and girlish, with a striped skirt, gray silk stockings, and gray shoes with high heels. She stood there with her eyes fixed toward the mountain and I could see how truly she was waiting for *some one* to come back, and *what* a woman she was for one who loved her to come back to, after an adventure!

"They did not return, however, that day, but it was not at all unusual and no one—the hotel proprietor said—should be in the least anxious because, no doubt, the ascent was more difficult than they had imagined, and they would be a day late. That night at dinner, Mrs. Manners never removed her eyes from the mountain. Her dress was very low, her hair beautifully done, and she never wore jewels. As she sat there this bright evening night with her profile turned to us all, it seemed as though she wanted to penetrate into the secrets of the mountain and look into its chasms and its abysses and to brush away its snows.

"I was dressing in my room the following morning and, as I put on my heaviest clothes for a long walk and a climb, for I intended going that morning with Henri to the glaciers, I had a very strange feeling such as I can never remember having experienced before; the feeling of being drawn into others' lives in spite of myself.

"It was the most divine summer day, not a single cloud in the deepest of blue skies. As far as one could see, this blue, blue Alpine sky stretched over the valley, and against it all the range of Mont Blanc seemed so sharp and so clear that it was as if it stretched an outline against the intense blue. There was something fascinating about it, perfectly absorbing, the dark side of the mountain was so deep in shadow and the snow was so dazzling and pure. I could see one of the glaciers from my window and it shone like silver with

great azure fissures yawning and gaping down its length. Since two human beings felt that they had to go out and fight for the love of a woman, and to fight a duel for a woman's heart and her love, it was a marvelous place to go and fight it, a majestic battleground! I was thinking this, saying to myself that my imagination had run away with me and that I was a romantic old maid beyond any doubt when a servant brought me a note from Mrs. Manners.

"DEAR MISS GRAYSON: I am starting on up to the pavilion to wait for them. Would you come with me? Please, please do.

"LETITICE MANNERS."

"Of course, I went; although it was far from being the excursion I had planned and I saw that I was being drawn into a drama in spite of myself.

"I did not know until we reached the little pavilion, till we were in its little bare, cold, room right among the snow peaks and alongside the glaciers, that a search party of thirteen guides had started out that morning to look for Mr. Manners and his friend. I don't know whether Mrs. Manners knew this or not until we reached the pavilion. All the way from Plessiny to the top of the mountain, we drove with Henri part of the way, and went up on muleback the rest of the way, Mrs. Manners did not speak once, either of her husband or his friend. It was British reserve, I dare say, or else it was temperament. Who can tell?"

Here Mrs. McLane interrupted in her Irish voice.

"Wasn't it, Miss Grayson, because she did not dare to speak—couldn't let herself begin and not go on? She couldn't let you see what she was feeling and not break down entirely."

"I thought all that," said Miss Grayson, "and I also wondered whether Mrs. Manners really was sure herself of how she felt. And sometimes I wondered if she were not sick with fear that perhaps the dream and the desire of a

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long time were coming true at last. At any rate she said nothing. She seemed to me more like a woman from whom all life and desire had suddenly passed away. She was so quiet and so cold, and white as the snow itself, not like a dead woman, more like a dead child, for she seemed very, very young indeed.

"From the pavilion we could see the path leading to the Refuge, from which the two Englishmen had started out. All the way to the pavilion Henri had told us tales of mountain climbing and disasters and I wanted to stop him, and tried to, but Mrs. Manners said: 'Let him talk; don't stop him.' And I wondered how she could want to hear, but she seemed to. Henri said:

"I have never known any one so brave as these two gentlemen are and so reckless, especially one; he seems trying, one might say, to end his life in the snows.' When Henri said this he turned to us and laughed, and of course he did not quite mean this. Mrs. Manners asked quietly, 'Which one?' Henri said, 'Signora, I do not know which one. My brother says one is more reckless than the other. He says that he has never seen any one so keen on adventures than one of them. He is always urging the other one on.' And Mrs. Manners asked again, 'Which one?' And Henri repeated, 'Signora, I cannot tell you which one it is, but it is one of them.'

"From our little bare rooms with their bare wooden floors and white-washed walls, with their windows open to the mountain's peak and to the sky, Mrs. Manners and I looked out on a world so pure, so remote, so far above all human things and human needs, and human passions and desires, that I couldn't possibly keep my mind on man's love and woman's love. The little Refuge itself was too near God's heaven.

"When night came there was a full moon and the stars were wonderful.

Outside it was as bright as day. Mrs. Manners took the corner room and began her watch at the window, and I wrapped her up in rugs and shawls and left her. I went to my own room and lay down on my bed.

"It was past midnight when I went to sleep and I can't tell you why, because I am used to watching, but I slept until seven the next morning as soundly and as well as though I had been under a narcotic or a spell! They woke me at seven with coffee and Mrs. Manners came in too, and we had breakfast together. She was in great spirits; her cheeks were bright and her eyes full of light.

"'Miss Grayson,' she said, 'they brought me news at five o'clock, but I couldn't bear to wake you! Everything is all right! They are at the Refuge, tired out and will be down by noon. I went to sleep at five,' Mrs. Manners said, 'and I feel so rested!'

"We were taking our coffee and honey and bread in the most glorious Alpine sunlight in the open window when she took my hands and clung to them. 'Oh, Miss Grayson, I have been so terrified! I have been so afraid that *one of them would not come back!*'

"I forced her to lie down again after breakfast and I darkened the room, shutting out the glorious spectacle of snow and sunlight, the gleaming silver of the ice, the shining of the distant glaciers, and the low-lying, treacherous, and cruel, invading snow with its avalanches and horrors, and I left her like this. But the great white mountain seemed to cast its mysterious magnetism over the place and I couldn't escape from the spell of it. I went out and walked about in the cold and the beauty, but Mrs. Manners slept until noon.

"I was sitting out of doors, fascinated, watching the little path that led up to the Refuge, when I saw Henri come running down the mountain. He had been gone from us since the night

before and I, personally, had not felt sure of the truth of any news until Henri came to confirm it. Now he rushed up to me, his face all working with excitement, and I knew what he was going to say before he spoke.

"Signora, there has been a terrible disaster! They are coming down now with only one of the two English gentlemen. Four of them are coming now with him. The others have remained to try to find the other's body. They will be here now soon, signora. Will you tell the lady?"

"Henri and I were now at the hotel door together and I don't know where they came from, but all the people of the pavilion were around us, every one except Mrs. Manners, who was asleep upstairs.

"Signora, look! Henri pointed up to the path and two or three of the hotel people started forward to meet the guides and what they were carrying. I saw the little group coming down with ropes and packs on their back and they were carrying one man on the stretcher. 'Signora, he is not dead,' Henri said, 'he is only weak and overcome. He will be all right and well in a few hours.'

"I turned to go and fetch Mrs. Manners, but she was already downstairs, suddenly startled from sleep, big-eyed and ashen-pale. She put out both hands like some one in the dark and I led her away, with my arm around her waist. She leaned against me, holding on to me as though I had been a tree against which she had been blown in a storm.

"Without looking at me she asked in a quiet voice, 'Only one has come back?' and I said, 'He is alive and he will be all right in a few hours.' Mrs. Manners repeated, 'Only one has come back!' and she dropped my arm and stood alone without any support.

"Then she said to Henri, 'Please go on, I am able to walk alone, I want to

go alone.' The others fell away then and I let her go forward alone, and Henri and I stood back to let her go toward the little path down which the group of men were coming slowly.

"I did not ask Henri the question, 'Which one of them has come back?' Mrs. Manners did not ask him, either. I understood she wished to be alone when she should know.

"The man whom they were carrying on the stretcher was not much hurt and slowly he raised himself up. As he saw Mrs. Manners coming toward him he lifted himself quite up and waved his arm and his hand to her. It was like an Englishman, game and a sportsman, even on his way back from the vision of death. As Mrs. Manners saw him raise his arm and wave she ran forward, calling his name——"

Miss Grayson stopped. No one spoke until Miss Moore said:

"You want each of us to work it out for ourselves, Miss Grayson, don't you? It is maddening, but I am not at all sure I don't like it best that way."

Miss Grayson seemed still to be under the spell of her own story. Tommy Hereford said: "We are all honorable men, Miss Grayson, and we have given you our word or honor, so what *can we do* but wonder, and be still?"

Mrs. McLane laughed. "I am not an honorable man in the least. I am only a curious Irishwoman, but, my dear, you said that your story illustrated the Power of Will or the Triumph of Desire. Didn't you say that, Miss Grayson?"

"Yes," said the Red Cross nurse, who seemed hardly to have come back to them, "yes, I said that."

"Well," said Mrs. McLane, "then we know who came back! The lover came back, and that was the triumph of Desire and Power and of Mrs. Manners' will."

Miss Grayson slowly crushed out the

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end of her cigarette on the tray by her side and she rose.

"I think I shall go upstairs. I have to take a very early train."

Mrs. McLane put her hand on her guest's arm and said in her rich, Irish voice, "Oh, no, you cannot go like that. No, no one of us can sleep until we know."

Miss Grayson showed no further interest in her tale, but walked quietly toward the door. She appeared to have dropped the story and its listeners completely.

"But," said the girl who was staying in the house, "there was more than one Will Power at work, wasn't there, Miss Grayson?"

"You see," but as Miss Grayson made no response, Cynthia turned to Mrs. McLane and Tommy Hereford, who was sitting musingly in a corner of the sofa, "there was Mrs. Manners' will and desire for the safe return of her friend, and there was his desire, too, I suppose to return and to win."

Tommy Hereford said from his sofa, "Now is the time to speak up for poor old Manners. There was *his* will too, wasn't there? *His* determination to win out, to keep his wife, to get the victory over the treachery of his friend and a

woman's foolishness!" Hereford looked keenly at Miss Grayson. "I have not forgotten that you said he had Will Power enough not to drink before going up and *to go in fit*, not to speak of the capabilities he showed in transporting in time of war armistice, Worcestershire sauce, lemon pop, and Egyptian cigarettes to an outlandish Italian village! I am unconditionally for Manners' return, and I wager you he won out! I think he won, didn't he, Miss Grayson?"

Miss Grayson said, "I hope you don't think that the eight o'clock train tomorrow is too early for your household, Mrs. McLane." And the three women went out of the winter garden into the hall, Tommy Hereford following.

At the foot of the stairs Mrs. McLane said, "You know that it is all fish that comes to my net! I am a writer, Miss Grayson. Will you let me write this story?"

Cynthia Moore said, "Why, your editors won't like it or the public either to be left as Miss Grayson has left us."

"No," said Miss Grayson as she began to go upstairs looking back at Mrs. McLane, "I wouldn't write it if I were you. Neither the public nor the editors will be satisfied."

THE GAINER

YOU gave me a heartbreak,

And gave me a song,

Happy young cavalier

Riding along!

Handsome young cavalier,

Riding, aglow

For new lips to tutor

And new tears to know!

Scornful young cavalier

Riding away—

Love lasts but a lifetime,

A song lasts for aye!

MARY CAROLYN DAVIES.



Counterfeit

By Hugh MacNair Kahler

Author of "The Oblgee,"
"The East Wind," etc.

ONE by one, as the pink mist thinned and lifted from the mental landscape, Catherine became aware of trespassers on a universe which, for several pluperfect minutes, had belonged exclusively to her—and Pip.

Some of them were almost welcome, even then—her father, the deep line suddenly smoothed from between his eyebrows, regarded her with the old, confidential, one-sided grin with which they had shared their secret jokes from the beginning of things. Her mother, incorrigibly a girl, exhibited her characteristic flutter of delighted excitement. There were remoter presences along the fringe of consciousness, girls with a delectable confession of envy perceptible below congratulatory surfaces, men with an agreeable regret in their eyes. And, at last, confronted reluctantly, there was Governor Gresham himself.

Catherine's fingers tightened in Pip's, and she pressed a little closer against the comforting hollow of his shoulder. A vivid memory of a play came to her: a scene in which young, happy lovers played with romping children in a spring garden, until, without a sound, a huge, forbidding figure appeared at the gate, arms folded, face inscrutable and grim. She had forgotten what followed, but the sudden shadow which fell across the scene had been able to frighten her dreams for years afterward. The image of Pips' father

seemed to overshadow her now with something of the same gray prophecy of evil.

She envisioned him almost photographically, the great, impressive bulk of him, erect and powerful and dominating, the set, inexorable strength of his face, lips which looked as if they could not relax, eyes which beat their way ruthlessly into other people's thoughts and still told nothing of what went on behind their ice-blue irises. She shivered as she tried to meet them, even in her mere mental picture.

Pip's thought seemed to have marched with hers. He had stopped his effervescent superlatives, suddenly almost matter-of-fact, businesslike.

"We won't have to wait, Cathie. Father's always told me that when I marry I can have half the estate. So, as soon as you'll make it—"

She caught an undertone of uncertainty. "Wouldn't it be better to talk it over with your father first? So long as any plan we might make would depend on his consent, anyway."

"Oh, we can take that for granted. You—I'm afraid you've got a wrong idea of him, Cathie, that formal, platform sort of a front he puts up. Underneath, oh, you'll find out what a prince he is when you know him better!"

Catherine couldn't think of anything that fitted. Her silence alarmed Pip.

"I mean it. You're just judging him by the surface."

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"I'm not judging him at all, Pip. There's no question of that. It's—it's the other way about. He's got to judge me—and I'm afraid."

His arm tightened. "Don't be. It's all right. Why, when I tell him——" He stopped short. "That reminds me. Isn't it the proper thing for me to go and tell your father? That needn't wait."

She checked him. "No. We'll let that wait, too, till you've found out what Governor Gresham thinks about it. If he's pleased——"

"He will be. Come on: I'd better get it over with while I'm feeling brave."

But she held her ground and had her way. Gradually the pink mists enveloped them again. But they didn't quite exclude the governor this time. It seemed to Catherine as if he stood back, watching them with those hard, frozen eyes, willing to wait because he knew that he controlled. Still, Pip knew him better than anybody else, and Pip was confident. She told herself that she was being silly.

Pip, suddenly contemptuous of time-tables, would have overstayed his train if she had not driven him off in time to catch it. "He'll be more apt to like me if I help you keep your appointments with him, instead of tempting you to break them. He's expecting you tomorrow."

"Yes, but I could phone him. He couldn't expect me if he knew I'd been getting a mortgage on you. Nobody would. Besides, it's nothing important—just a report on some property they've been trying to saw off on us, over in Pittland. If it amounted to anything, he'd have gone up there himself, instead of sending me."

Cathie's mind snapped away from the point. The words twisted her thoughts back to something she was trying not to remember, the money. She mustn't let herself mix that up with Pip. It

wasn't the Gresham money that made her care like this. And yet the careless tone Pip used in speaking about the rejected investment thrilled her. She couldn't help a cinematographic vision of the years before them, of Cathie Winthrop suddenly beyond the reach of money troubles, able to spend without counting costs. The racing thought fetched a wide, far circle and brought her back to Governor Gresham and his gelid eyes, his lips that closed like the locked lips of a purse.

"Please, Pip. I've got to make him like me. And the sooner you see him, the sooner we'll know when we can be m-married." Orange blossoms flowered at the word. Pip, unwillingly persuaded, drifted into the night on the breath of them. She stood in a window, watching the dark, arching elms engulf his scudding cab, suddenly troubled to discover that she had no mental photograph of him. His voice was still in her ears, and she thrilled to the touch of his arms and lips, but her inner vision misted when she tried to see him.

Perhaps if it were dark his face would come back. She crossed to the switch, but, with her finger on its button, stopped to send a slow glance about the room.

This was all part of it. She must always remember just how everything looked—the big chair where he had sat, leaning forward, his arms on his knees; the corner of the rug rumped, where his heel had caught it when he sprang at her in that terrifying, joyous surge; the light glinting from the brazen knobs of the fire irons; the forgotten novel, still in its gay paper jacket, open face downward on the divan cushions.

"What a bully room!" He couldn't help noticing it, even when his eyes seemed to have space for nothing but her. She stretched out her arms in a hungry, little gesture, as if they would have loved to hug the room and every-

thing in it. If he remembered the back-ground, as she would, he'd never need to be ashamed of it. Nobody's romance could have asked a better setting.

She pressed the switch and went into the hall. Again she saw through Pip's eyes, and again she approved. The glimpse of the dining room through the wide door added to her content. It was only when she had climbed the stairs that she found a discord. The paper in the upper hall had faded so that even in the blue spark to which the gas flame had been reduced its blotched discolorations were visible. The long, narrow rug was almost shabby, and her feet detected its thin pile. Not that it was positively dingy. At a careless glance even the hall would have passed, so long as the bedroom doors were shut. Only, compared to the lower floor, it jangled a little. If Pip had found her up here, instead of there—

At the end of the passage she hesitated, divided between a hunger to keep her secret all her own for another night and a sense of fair play which demanded that she share it instantly with those two to whom it meant almost as much as it meant to her. A newly edged intuition let her see that perhaps it meant even more, as if, along the corridor of years, she could see Pip and herself sitting and waiting and wondering. She parted harsh, lank hangings, and stepped past them quickly.

The contrast between the little sitting room and the living room downstairs held her attention for a moment. The light of the oil lamp was merciful, but even so, she felt the shabbiness of the books in their drab cloth bindings, the flat, stark ugliness of the oak shelves, the stuffy, overcrowded effect of the furniture. Suppose Pip had come to her up here—

Her mother, with no need of words, exploded in half-finished sentences, which Cathie scarcely heard. Her glance searched her father's. She had

a throb of gladness as she saw that the deep groove was gone from between his brows; that his face looked younger and infinitely less tired. And he was grinning, too, in the old, uneven, understanding way.

It was relief to find no embarrassment of sticky sentiment. They were all practical people, the Winthrops. And it wasn't as if the thing had come as a surprise, of course. Pip had let them guess. A committee of ways and means went into executive session almost at once.

"You'll need a good many things right away," said Mrs. Winthrop. "And, of course, there's the trousseau to think about. I suppose you didn't settle the day—"

"No. Pip has to talk to the governor first. And I—"

She felt a change in them both at the name. There was something like apprehension in her mother's eyes.

"Of course, that's right. But Governor Gresham will be almost as pleased as Pip." Mrs. Winthrop's tone had the aggressive ring of self-persuasion.

"I hope so," said Cathie. "If he isn't, we'll have to wait, that's all. Pip's absolutely dependent on him."

There was a little pause. "Well, we can take his consent for granted, I guess. It's going to mean some planning, anyway." Mrs. Winthrop relapsed into meditations, patently mathematical. Cathie, consulting her father's eyes, saw the line reappear between them. A sudden pang of self-reproach hurt her.

"Oh, I hate it. I hate it!" She flung out the words with a passion foreign to her. "I've been a weight on you all these years. I've had everything any girl could have. I hate myself for taking it, when you—"

John Winthrop shook his head. "That's just silly, Cathie. You know it's been more fun for us than for you. You hadn't any choice. We planned it

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for you. And it's been worth it, hasn't it?"

"You mean that it's brought me—Pip? Yes. It has. Oh, not in the horrid sense. But it's made me his sort, instead of a—a middle-class person, with a high-school diploma and a taste for the movies. He wouldn't have cared for me if I hadn't lived his kind of life, mixed with his kind of people. I'd never have met him, for that matter, if you hadn't sent me to St. Agatha's, where I could get to know Cora Bless and go home with her over the holidays. That's all true—if I weren't a counterfeit aristocrat, I couldn't have hoped for—for anything like this."

"You're not a counterfeit anything, Cathie." Winthrop's voice was hurt.

"I hope you're right. Because the governor—you don't know him or you'd understand. He's eighteenth century, somehow. He doesn't belong in a democracy. You can't even look at him without feeling that he's a thoroughbred, the real thing. I can't express it. There's something—something regal about him. He makes me afraid that he sees straight through me and knows I'm only an imitation."

"That's absolute chatter, you know." John Winthrop sat up. "When it comes to blood, if there's any better than yours—"

"It's not that. I can't explain it. Only I feel raw and cheap and silly when he looks at me."

"Stop thinking about it. You're only imagining things. Because we've had to scheme a bit to keep up appearances doesn't mean that you're a sham, Cathie. Pip would have felt it if you hadn't been absolutely sincere. A boy in his shoes learns to draw that line very quickly, depend on it. Run along to bed. We'll hold a council of war. And don't worry. Everything's all right."

Cathie went. Alone, her outburst shamed her. It was as if she had flung

her father's money troubles in his face, when conscience told her that had it not been for her those troubles would never have found him out. It was her fault, from the very beginning. The house on Garrity Street would have satisfied John Winthrop till he died if there had been no Cathie to consider. They had bought and built out here on the hill because Cathie must grow up with the right associates. She remembered the discussion perfectly. Then schools, Miss Carewe's first, and Hillside later, and, at last, St. Agatha's—schools that involved standards in almost everything, from clothes to carpets.

Once, in a time of special stress, she had overheard a snatch of outspoken talk between her parents.

"I've milked the business to death, Jenny. That's the plain truth of it. Every time it's had a chance of growing I've robbed it to keep up with the pace. If we'd stayed in the old house five years longer—"

That was it. If. If Cathie had gone to the public school and played with the grubby, little brats who swarmed in the Garrity Street district, they might be living up here, now, without any need to scheme and pretend—like the Conlys, for instance, who'd stayed in the gas-house quarter till old Mike had made his million or two.

She thought of the two Conly girls, and her logic went astray. If she'd grown up to be like them, Pip certainly wouldn't have liked her. She fumbled her way to a compromise.

"It's better this way. And it's true that they've loved doing it for me. And it's all coming out right, too."

She fancied she saw Governor Gresham's straight lips curve a little.

Pip's first letter, written on the train, was pure joy. She let it persuade her against the tormenting doubts. Everything would be all right. It had to be.

Life couldn't be so needlessly cruel as to cheat her now. She was silly to insist on judging Governor Gresham by his manner and his look. Pip knew him through and through, and Pip was perfectly sure.

His second letter confirmed the first. The governor had taken the news splendidly.

He'd foreseen it right along, ever since the last time you were here. You might think he knew it before I did. He said no end of nice things about you. And now listen hard. This is the best part of all.

He wants you to come down—as soon as you can. Of course, he can't ask you here, but Cora'd love to have you, and she's writing you to-day. Father says he ought to have a fair chance to get acquainted with you, and while he's doing it, a certain party might have a look at you, now and then.

He argued for six sprawling pages. Cathie read the letter over and again. Somehow, it carried a challenge, in spite of Pip's exuberant certainty that all was well. The governor dared her to give him his chance to study her. That was it. If she avoided the issue, took shelter behind distance and appeared to him only through Pip's high-colored reports, he would be sure of what he only suspected now. He'd know that she was afraid of him.

If she went, if she managed to bear inspection, she and Pip, between them, might persuade him. Either way she risked something, but the lesser risk, instinct told her, was to go. The decision seemed to strengthen her faith in herself. After all, Pip loved her, and no counterfeit could have awakened that fine, clean splendor of passion in a boy like Pip. She was doubting herself too much.

Mr. and Mrs. Winthrop accepted the plan without debate. Cathie saw an exchange of glances and understood. Her mother's had said, "Clothes?" and her father's had answered the inevitable, "Yes." She choked down a protest. If she went to Exton, she'd have

to get some things. Exton was fanatically gay, with the gayety of the small, old community which has been rich for three generations. She'd need at least two new evening dresses, and the old furs were hardly possible.

They shopped industriously for two days. Luckily, Dennison's had the things which suited her best. They could go as far as they chose, there. Mrs. Winthrop's policy of keeping the Dennison bills paid, whatever happened to the others, proved its worth now. The saleswomen were delightfully deferential. And there was no trying moment of suspense while the sales slips waited for a manager's approval. Sometimes, in other stores, Cathie had gone out with her cheeks flaming, leaving a canceled order behind her and feeling the sophisticated smirks of the clerks on her back. Nothing like that was to be feared at Dennison's. The Winthrop credit was good for even more than the five hundred and sixty dollars they charged to it.

Cora Bless, freckled and wholesome and homely as ever, was at the station with Pip. Her presence strengthened Cathie's spirits against reviving doubts. She allowed herself to be hugged in Cora's exuberant, masculine style, a little relieved, without being altogether pleased, at Pip's ability to confine his own welcome to a handshake. She had quite decided that Exton shouldn't have any foundation for gossip until she was ready to make a formal announcement. Cora, of course, was in the secret, but Cora possessed a remarkable knack of holding her tongue.

Pip went up with them in the Bless car, and Cora obligingly provided a few minutes of solitude. Cathie almost forgot Governor Gresham, for a space. She hadn't realized how terribly she cared, somehow. But it wasn't possible to keep the governor out of even that first pink-misted interview.

"You'll see him to-night," said Pip. "He's going to the Careys' on purpose."

"And you think it's all right?"

"I know it is. Wait till he sees you. I say, wear that pinkish thing, won't you? I—I'd like to have him see you the way you looked when——"

"Silly! As if he'd notice clothes."

Pip was suddenly earnest. "Don't you think he doesn't notice 'em! He's a regular connoisseur, Cathie. One reason he never liked Edith Carey was the way she dressed. He often spoke about it. Said a girl who couldn't manage her own wardrobe couldn't be expected to manage a home and a family properly, either."

Cathie's eyes sparkled. "I don't think he'll dislike me on that score, Pip." She thought happily of her two trunks and the new evening frocks which seemed to have been invented by somebody who knew and loved her. If clothes mattered so much—well, that simplified things tremendously.

She had an agreeable conviction of power as she faced Governor Gresham in the corner of the Careys' hall. The effect of "the pinkish thing," tested on Cora and her mother, had confirmed Pip's opinion.

"It's just devastating, Cathie!" Cora wagged her head. "There ought to be a law against engaged girls wearing such things!"

Fortified thus, she met the governor almost too casually. She was hardly conscious of any nervous tension as he bowed formally over her hand and pronounced a slightly stilted phrase of greeting. He made her think of Daniel Webster, whose formidable visage glowered over a detested steel engraving in the upstairs sitting room at home. To-night, however, she suddenly remembered that Mr. Webster had left behind him some strong evidence of a fair collection of human weaknesses below that imposing mask. And Pip's chance reference to the question of

clothes hinted that Governor Gresham also had joints in his armor.

She steered the conversation deftly toward his failing. Pip had been right. Amazingly, this stiff, formal personage actually knew about dress, possessed a very keen eye for color and line, had more than a glimmer of the science underlying the art. An enthusiast herself, Cathie expanded as she explored his understanding. It startled her, when Pip interrupted the talk, to hear that she had spent twenty minutes by his watch in talking dress with the governor.

"We got on famously," she told him, as they moved out among the dancers. "I was awfully interested. He really knows about clothes, Pip."

"I told you so. That front of his is pure bluff. No, not that, either. It's natural enough. But it covers up the man underneath. Dad's a regular fellow, with a Patrick Henry make-up. You'll be crazy about him when you know him."

Cathie doubted this. She had already subdued her awed respect to a point at which the governor failed to frighten her, but she was quite sure that she would never have any very lively sentiment toward him. It would be about as easy to love a bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln, she told herself. But she let Pip cling to his confidence.

After its enlightening beginning, the evening became a progressive experience in pure delight. Cathie loved it all; she loved dancing with a sort of passion, she loved the kaleidoscope of colors and faces, the perfection of the music, the soft, uninsistent luxury of the setting, the sense of being part of it all, of "belonging." And there was Pip, glowing when she suffered him to dance with her and looking adorably miserable when she exiled him, for appearance's sake, in favor of Bicky Waters or Joe Bless. She caught a glimpse of herself in a tall glass, and the ra-

diance of her face startled her. Everything was emphatically well with the world.

The days and nights danced away from her. Extton was enjoying itself in its invariable fashion. Something was in the wind for every possible second of leisure, something of the sort which Cathie loved, from jolly little tea parties at the country club on the flank of the sprawling mountain back of the town to formal dances which ended, as often as not, in reckless, madcap romps. And, of course, there was Pip, never very remote, from the moment when his telephone broke in on her morning dreams till the bitter-sweet instant when they said good night for the final, fiftieth time, and Cathie could run up to her room to feel his kisses telling her, more convincingly than his remembered words, that everything was utterly and supremely as it should be.

The governor's attitude helped to persuade her, too. After her discovery of his disconcerting acquaintance with the inner science of dress, some measure of her awe of him was finally lifted. He became, curiously, more human. She could face him, now, without being harassed by the idea that he was looking into her mind and laughing scornfully at what he found there. She began to be almost at her ease with him, in spite of the trying straightness of his eyes.

It wasn't difficult, in talking about clothes, to drop a remark, here and there, intended to illuminate him about her other abilities and attributes. From what Pip told her, as well as from Cora's slangy gossip and her own observation, she could guess that the dominant trait of the man was a kind of aristocracy; not the cheap, snobbish counterfeit, but the reality.

She was vague as to the distinction, when it came to expressing it in words, but it was perfectly clear to her, nevertheless. He wasn't like the smart peo-

ple at Lakeport, people so acutely conscious of their newness that they were constantly obsessed with a desire to manifest their wealth, their position, their at-homeness in the upper stratum. He didn't sneer, as they did. He didn't talk about money—*ever*. He merely radiated a certainty of himself and of what he stood for which reminded Catherine Winthrop of half-remembered characters from Thackeray.

She saw the one fatal defect, in his eyes, would be a want of this same quality. She did her best to let him see that she possessed it. She was adroit at introducing an occasional reference to St. Agatha's, to the girls whose friendships had followed her away from that sedately exclusive institution. She permitted him to see that at home, in Lakeport, there was no door that would not open gladly at her approach, that, in the best sense, she belonged in his world and in Pip's.

Sometimes she was a little ashamed of it all. It seemed demeaning to exhibit herself in such a fashion before those cold, percipient, judicial eyes. It was almost as if she were bidding for his favor, trying to "show off." Only the knowledge that unless she pleased him she could have Pip's love at no less price than a break between the father and son comforted her against these reproaches. Pip was all this man's world. She realized that with a new insight, sharpened by her thought of what it meant to her mother and father to surrender her to Pip.

It wasn't easy for the governor to see Pip turn away from him, at the very best of it. She couldn't help feeling that no matter how much his father might come to love her, he would always miss the close, exclusive intimacy with Pip on which she would be inevitably an intruder. It was something like compassion for the proud, silent, reserved, old man which stiffened her purpose to win his liking and respect

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at any sacrifice. But she knew that it was very far indeed from being her only motive.

The money. It couldn't be ignored, no matter how completely she cared for Pip himself. Her memory was too heavily laden with proofs of money's vital importance to let her forget its part in the present problem. It spelled the difference between happiness and failure, however terribly people might care for each other. You couldn't possibly be happy if you had to scheme and worry over dollars and pennies. They had tried, at home, to keep the finances out of her sight, but, of course, she'd seen. People might talk all they pleased about the insignificance of money, about the all-sufficiency of love. Cathie knew better. -

It wasn't that she was selfish. Pip came first in her thoughts of the future. Even supposing that she could ignore poverty, Pip couldn't. She saw that more clearly every day, as he showed her, again and again, his complete detachment from the financial aspects of pleasure. He'd always had what he wanted, within the limits fixed by the governor's code of a gentleman's needs. He'd never had to count costs. His tastes were rooted deep, too deep to be lightly changed. Even if she could have hoped for happiness on what Pip might manage to earn, Cathie was certain that Pip couldn't.

Besides, it wasn't altogether a question of earning. Pip had been trained carefully to manage wealth already won, taught to understand the particular sort of wealth he would eventually inherit. He knew a lot about the Gresham investments—the coal properties in West Virginia, the timber lands farther back in the hills, the real estate in Pittland and Lakeport and Syrchester. But all this had unfitted him for the job of earning money, Cathie saw. Thrown on his own resources, his training became a positive handicap. If

she caused a break, then, she took Pip away from work in which he would be useful and able and happy and faced him with a task wholly foreign to his instincts and apprenticeship.

It wasn't a matter for speculation, either, as to what Governor Gresham might do if Pip disobeyed him. Pip had made it quite clear to her, from the first, that his father exacted the same implicit obedience now that he had required when his son was in knickerbockers, and that failure to render it would mean an instant stoppage of his allowance. On three memorable occasions he had made practical experiment.

"He's got a sort of patriarchal idea," said Pip. "He always makes me think of the Roman senators you read about. There's something fine about it, too, even if it does chafe a bit, now and then. He'd hate to do it, but he wouldn't hesitate on that account."

So, as she set herself to make, the governor like her, Cathie knew that there was no alternative except giving up Pip or waiting until he was his own commanding officer, two stark impossibilities not to be considered even as remote and dreadful contingencies.

It was on the last day of her visit that they revealed themselves as certainties.

The governor called formally, early in the afternoon. Mrs. Bless faded out of the room almost at once. Cathie, trying to quiet a suffocating little flutter in her throat, braced herself for the impending climax, warned by a telepathic intuition that danger threatened, and ready to fight hard for her dreams. The governor used silences more effectively than words. He sat watching her, his big body seeming to grow more and more impressive as the breathless little clock ticked away the seconds. Cathie felt her strength slipping away from her. She was afraid of him again, more afraid than ever.

"It's—it's sweet of you to come and

say good-by," she said, when the silence couldn't be endured another moment.

"I came to say rather more than that." His voice was friendlier than she had hoped, and for a flash she tried to build on it. But he went on, deliberately, with an effect of finality which disarmed her. "When Philip told me that he had proposed marriage to you, I was not in a position to speak with—*with definitude*. I regretted that his impatience had led him to speak before consulting me, but that was past remedy. I suggested, therefore, that he arrange to have you visit Cora, so that I might acquaint myself with the situation. Perhaps you knew that?"

"Pip"—his quick frown reminded her that he detested the beloved abbreviation—"Philip told me."

"I hoped that he would not. I wanted to see you rather less on your mettle. But you would have guessed, in any case. It does not signify. You know, I believe, that Philip is entirely dependent on me?"

"Yes, but that doesn't matter. If it meant that he'd have to quarrel with you, I wouldn't let him. I've seen how close you are. I couldn't spoil that ever—"

"Then it is unnecessary to go into that phase of the situation. Since you are prepared to respect my preference, regardless of any pressure, it becomes merely a matter of stating it. I beg that you will believe that it is my affection for my son and nothing else which prompts what I have to tell you. It is because I know Philip so thoroughly and because his happiness means more to me than anything else in life, that I am forbidding him to go on with this romance."

Cathie waited for him to continue. She couldn't speak, she couldn't think. There was only a blind, aching consciousness of being beaten, of suffer-

ing, helpless to defend herself or to strike back, a deliberate, inexorable rain of blows.

"This puts me, I know, in an unpleasant attitude. I seem cruel, unreasonable, perhaps even selfish. I should like to convince you that this is no more than appearance, but I'm afraid that's impossible. You see, my dear Miss Winthrop, I've given more thought to this emergency than most fathers would have done. I've always foreseen a possibility that the day might come when I should have to hold a very real power over Philip for his own sake. I have tried consistently to build up in him a respect for my judgment, a conviction of my disinterested love, a reciprocal affection on his part which would bind him to me when our wishes clashed. And because I knew that something like this might make that hold inadequate, I have supplemented it with the material. I've trained Philip to be dependent on me. He knows how to manage our property, but he knows nothing else about business. If he chose to disobey me, he wouldn't be able to earn a living for himself, to say nothing of supporting a wife."

"There's no need of bringing that in. I couldn't let him break with you." Cathie managed to speak steadily. "But I don't see why I—why you don't like me. You can't believe that I don't care for Pip—"

"No. I'm convinced of that. It is only because my eye sees a little below the surface that I am forbidding him—because I know, certainly, that neither of you could be happy. I wish that I might convince you that I think a little of your own happiness, as well as Philip's, and that it is partly for your sake—"

"I can believe that you think so." Cathie's wits cleared at last, and she saw her opening. "But if you assert that you are separating us on my account as well as Pip's, it's only fair that

I should know how you reason it out, isn't it?"

He hesitated, his eyes searching hers keenly. "Yes. That is quite just. But you will construe it, I am afraid, as an added offense."

"Try me, at least." Her eyes glowed.

"Philip is exactly what he seems, and you are not. That is the essence of it. He is genuine, and you are—forgive the word—a clever counterfeit. He has never learned to distinguish between fact and appearance, because with him they are identical. Your whole training has been to differentiate between them. Bluff—the besetting sin of our democracy—is the central motive of your existence—to seem what you know you are not. You have deceived him, because his eyes are self-blinded by his love, and his simplicity confuses appearance with truth."

Cathie sat very still. The words jarred home with the force of so many blows, blows which she could not parry nor return.

"You demanded this frankness as your right. You must forgive me for its cruelty. There is no foundation for happiness in specious lies, in cunning shams. I am too much concerned in Philip's future to stand by while he invests his soul in a counterfeit. It is better to hurt him now than to let him spoil his life, and yours, just as surely as his. For there would be no happiness with him from the moment he discovered his mistake. Be sure of that, my dear."

"A counterfeit!" She had used the word too often in her own thought not to feel the justice of it now, but she felt the need of justification, less in this man's sight than in hers. "Do you mean that I'm only pretending to care for Pip—"

"I think that you know exactly what I mean. Your question is an instance. I believe that you have convinced yourself that you care for him. No; I will

go further. I admit that you do care, honestly and deeply. But if you did not, and he had asked you to marry him, I am very sure that you would have consented. If you had not, you would have contradicted the convincing evidence of everything about you."

"You have seen me half a dozen times, Governor Gresham. Is it fair to form an opinion on such slight acquaintance?"

"Once would have been sufficient. But I made doubly sure. I have been at some pains to find out all that could be discovered about you. Suppose we spare each other the unpleasantness of going into that? I think I could convince you that I am well informed, but to what purpose? We understand each other. You will be happier if you give yourself to some one whose view and instinct march with yours, some one dedicated, as you are, to the cult of bluff and pose and pretense. You would only make Philip wretched and yourself still more so."

He rose, straightening his shoulders. "We have said enough, I think. You will scarcely believe that I have borne no malice and bear none—"

"But I do believe it." Cathie faced him bravely. "I see what you mean. I—I have pretended, always. But it wasn't the kind of pretense you think. I wasn't trying to seem better than I am, so much as to seem what I ought to be, what I would be, without trying, if—if things had been different. But there's no way of convincing you of that. I shan't try. Good-by."

She held out her hand. He took it gravely, without speaking, bowed with the old-fashioned, formal courtliness which seemed to remove him back into bygone generations, and left her.

She caught the afternoon train, without seeing Pip again.

It was hard to convince them at home that the matter was closed. Mrs. Win-

throp smiled skeptically at Cathie's stony repetitions. Lovers' quarrels were always desperately final affairs, she declared. John Winthrop said little, but Cathie saw that he clung to the same conviction. She lacked the courage to argue. After all the sacrifice, she couldn't fling in their faces the blunt truth that it had been wasted.

Pip wrote, of course. His letters served to strengthen Mrs. Winthrop's confidence, but Cathie, reading them till her eyes blurred and ached, knew better. He protested passionately. His father meant it all kindly, but didn't realize, didn't understand. He'd change his mind when he knew Cathie properly. Pip was sure about that. And if Cathie would marry him to-morrow, he'd manage perfectly till the governor saw reason. Other men had had to make their own way in the world, and he was just as capable of doing it as they had been. Or, if Cathie preferred to wait, to leave things as they stood, Pip would try to be patient, too. The only thing he couldn't bear was a break. He couldn't give her up, and so on, for page after page of boyish, eager outpourings.

Cathie answered briefly, without weakening her position by argument. His father had convinced her that they weren't suited to each other, she told him. There wasn't any more to be said. Pip would find that he was right.

Twice, when he came up to answer these notes in person, she nearly yielded. She cared—cared horribly, and the sight of him tortured her. But over his shoulder she saw, always, the grim, relentless face of his father, and below the rush of Pip's stumbling words she heard the governor's level, unanswerable indictment. And they gave her strength to resist, until Pip, hurt and bewildered, began to realize that she meant to stand her ground. His letters stopped. Even Mrs. Winthrop accepted the situation then.

"We'll just forget it, Cathie. Your father and I only wanted you to be happy, and if Pip wasn't the right man, it's good to find it out so soon. It would have been ever so much worse if we'd announced it. As it is, nobody need know."

Cathie understood the corollary. The campaign was to go on unchanged. They would continue to keep up appearances as desperately as ever, until somebody else rose to the bait, somebody whose father hadn't a merciless eyes for the distinction between being and seeming, somebody, perhaps, who would even think more of her for her skill at counterfeiting. The idea sickened her. And yet, what else? She couldn't go back and begin over again. She didn't want to. She clung more passionately than ever to what she had tricked life into giving her. A counterfeit aristocrat? Yes, perhaps, but better that than the other thing. She thought of the two Conly girls, who talked shrilly, in public, of cold baths and the cost of platinum settings. She remembered Angie Drake, a playmate of the old Garrity Street days, who had followed the straightforward course, gone to the public schools, learned stenography, earned her own living until she married Jim Drake, a boisterous, red-faced drummer, who called Angie "Kid" and pawed her affectionately in the sight of all men.

Cathie would have been like that if she hadn't pretended, if her parents hadn't schemed and scrimped and wasted to give her the superficial finish which Governor Gresham had stripped from her. Even now she couldn't wish for that.

She groped persistently for light on a riddle which deepened in obscurity as she considered it. What was reality, so far as Cathie Winthrop was concerned? How much of her was pretense? Where did the sham cease and the actuality begin? There was noth-

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ing false about her looks. Her face and figure didn't owe anything to art. Her speech wasn't studied. The intonations which differed perceptibly from the broader, simpler diction of her home were the natural result of her schools and associations. Her tastes weren't feigned, either. She didn't pretend to like things which bored her, nor to look down on things she liked because other people didn't care for them. Her plodding self-analysis brought her only to a greater uncertainty. She wasn't real, and yet it was impossible to say what was responsible for the sense of artificiality she couldn't deny or evade.

Gradually the question ceased to trouble her. Whatever she was, it was past remedy now. There was nothing to do but go on, counterfeit or real. The first positive enlightenment she owed to accident.

"It's too bad we went to Dennison's for those furs," said Mrs. Winthrop, looking up from her religious study of the fashion magazine which was edited on the theory that any garment costing less than two hundred dollars was unfit for print. "Of course, the two dresses were frightfully cheap, but you can't possibly wear them this winter, the way things have changed. And we can't charge anything more till the bill's paid."

Cathie lifted her brows. "Why, I thought we always paid Dennison's on the dot," she said. "Didn't you?"

"We couldn't, this time." Mrs. Winthrop always spoke fast when she regretted an unguarded remark. "Father felt that it wouldn't do to take any more away from the business just now. Of course, things will straighten out in a week or two—they always do—but—but—"

"Then we needn't worry about this winter," said Cathie. But she looked thoughtful. Here was one recognizable item of unreality, at last. She pretended to be rich. She did her best to

look as if there had been no need to count costs. At any sacrifice, she must be dressed as well as any other girl in Lakeport, as well as Alice Playre or Sallie Kent, whose fathers probably didn't even know what they spent on clothes. Always, till now, it had seemed so necessary that she had never examined the subject from any other viewpoint. Quite suddenly she faced a doubt. Suppose she did wear those two bargain dresses this winter? Would it matter? Wouldn't she be more nearly a real person than if, by the usual careful scheming, she managed to hold her own with Alice and Sallie and the rest?

The idea was unpleasant. Rather than come to that she'd stay at home, hide herself. They'd pity her, smile behind her back, gossip. Even her best friends—she remembered occasions when she had listened to whispers, shared in them, even. She put the thought away for future consideration. It needn't be settled now. And perhaps business would pick up. Her father was always hoping that it would.

But it didn't, and the line deepened between John Winthrop's brows. Cathie overheard low-voiced snatches of talk not meant for her ears, a rare flash of impatience on John Winthrop's part. "I can't possibly do it. I'm skating on the edge now. We're just hanging on. A touch would send us over—hand-to-mouth business—raw-material payments overdue—pressing me hard—"

Cathie listened intently. Business meant only a mysterious source from which some men extracted unlimited money, her father a cramped and niggardly gain. She didn't understand much about its processes, beyond a vague, fixed resentment that effort and merit weren't better rewarded.

"If they knew how hard up we are, they'd be down on me like a pack of wolves," said Winthrop, his voice rising. "You don't seem to realize that

it's serious. A couple of dresses seem to matter more than bankruptcy——"

Cathie intervened. "There aren't going to be any dresses this winter. Not one. That's settled."

"But you can't do without, child." Mrs. Winthrop's voice hinted of tears. "You can't go about unless you're properly dressed——"

"I'm not going about. I couldn't, anyway. Please don't try to make me."

"But people will think——"

"Does it matter so much?" Cathie let her shoulders droop. "Somehow, it doesn't, to me. I'm tired of trying to keep them from thinking what's true. And I'm going to stay at home, anyway. I couldn't possibly go dashing about as I did last year."

She saw an unmistakable relief in her father's eyes. And she held her ground against her mother's fluttering objections. Somehow, the incident cleared the air a little. She felt a lessening of tension. Mrs. Winthrop was unreconciled, but it made no difference. Cathie discovered that there was a good deal to be done about the house, in spite of the presence of two servants. It was rather interesting to help. The month wore itself out faster than she realized. And the first brought a collection of commercial envelopes, which, for the first time, held a clear meaning. Carrie, the sullen girl who combined the functions of waitress and chambermaid, happened to be upstairs when the postman rang. Cathie answered it herself. The number of thin communications, with transparent inserts showing the address from within, the names printed in their upper right-hand corners, woke her suddenly to an understanding of what her father faced.

She fingered the Dennison letter. It was addressed to John Winthrop, but, after all, it concerned her more than any one else. On the impulse she slipped it out of the sheaf and carried it up to her room. The set courtesy

of the typed phrases seemed to aggravate the sting of it—"no doubt escaped your attention"—"early remittance gratefully received." Why didn't they speak plainly and be done with it? Why hide behind thin excuses? She frowned at the letter, seeing beyond it the big, splendid store, housing its treasures. It wouldn't hurt Dennison's a bit to let the bill stand indefinitely. She had a sense of injury, of injustice.

But, as she idled through the morning paper, a little later, her eye caught the name again. It stood out from the banked array of close-set advertisements in the rear pages, dignified, exclusive, curiously aristocratic:

Dennison Has Several Openings in Its Sales Force for Women of Refinement and Taste, the Best Conditions and Associations, a Liberal Remuneration, and An Attractive Future——

Her lips curved at the absurdity of it. As if women of refinement and taste would stand behind counters and sell pins and tape to Dennison's patrons, even though guaranteed "the best conditions and associations!" Fancy Cathie, for instance, responding to this naive proposal! She found the social page and read its budget carelessly. And then, without quite understanding why, she came back to the classified advertisements. After all——

She found herself, an hour later, waiting to be interviewed by a Mr. Jesson, whose importance had mysteriously risen from the moment when she had surrendered to the weird, fantastic impulse. At home, reading his name at the foot of the advertisement, Cathie had condescended graciously. He would be embarrassed when he realized who she was, of course. She would have to put him at his ease, make him understand that she was quite in earnest about it. Now, as she waited in the cheerful wicker-and-chintz reception room, doubts arose. In his guarded invisibility Mr. Jesson ceased

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to be a person and became, inexplicably, a personage. Cathie was almost nervous as she followed a businesslike, eyeglassed girl into a glass-walled office compartment. A brisk, cordially abrupt man nodded curtly, without rising, her card between his fingers. Cathie's intention to be gracious faded before his level inspection. She took the chair he indicated with a flick of his hand.

"I—I saw your advertisement in the *Press* this morning. It interested me. So I came in to talk about it."

She felt it necessary to smile, and was puzzled to discover that no answering amusement lightened his expression.

"I'm tired of doing nothing, you see, and I thought it would be fun to try business."

He snapped the card on the desk. "I see. I'm sorry, but that isn't at all what we need, Miss—Miss Winthrop. People who go in for business as a sort of amusement don't fit in with our organization a bit. We need women who don't expect to play at working. I'm afraid our offer misled you."

Cathie stared. The idea that Denison's wouldn't jump joyfully at the chance of employing Cathie Winthrop had not entered her calculations. To be coolly rejected by this nobody as if she were trespassing on his valuable time and space was like an affront. She felt her cheeks burn.

"You see, Miss Winthrop, business isn't a game. It's in deadly earnest, every minute. To run a place like this successfully requires a sort of desperate efficiency that begins at the bottom and goes all the way through to the top. We can't afford to have one employee who isn't personally interested in our business, who hasn't a big, personal motive for doing his level best. Selling is hard, trying work. There's no fun in it. If we took you on, we'd only keep somebody else from getting your chance—somebody who needs the

money, who'd work hard to earn it and to earn promotion. It would cost us sixty-four dollars to train you in our sales school. And when you tired of the notion that would be wasted. It's not a personal matter, you see—"

Cathie's resentment vanished. He had managed to give her a sudden, accurate insight into the primary mechanics of business, the brutal, underlying impulse which gave such enterprises their life—hunger, the fear of want, the instant, pressing need of earning.

"I'm sorry I gave you the wrong idea of myself," she said quickly. "I'm just as much in earnest as anybody could be. It was just habit that made me pretend I was only doing it for fun. I'm not. I'm doing it because I've got to earn money. Why, I've a better reason than most applicants could possibly have. They don't owe you anything. I do. I owe you five hundred and sixty dollars, and I can't pay it except by work. I'm sorry I didn't say so at once."

She saw that she had scored. His tone changed, and his manner, for the first time, betrayed a visible deference. A dozen crisp questions put him in possession of the facts.

"It's an unusual situation, I admit," he said doubtfully. "I don't think we've ever confronted it before. Your desire to settle the obligation is—well, I wish more of our customers felt as keenly about their overdue accounts. But—you aren't fitted for it, Miss Winthrop. You'd find it unspeakably tiresome. I—I hardly know—"

"Try me, then. It seems to me you've very little to lose by an experiment. If I'm worth nothing, I've cost you nothing except my training. And against that there's the chance that I can pay back at least a little of what I owe."

He seemed to reach an abrupt decision. "We'll try it. Here"—he scribbled on a card—"give this to Miss Langan, in the next office. She'll tell you

about the details. I—I hope this is going to work out, Miss Winthrop. You've got something we try hard to find and hardly ever get. If you stick, I think you'll find a future that'll be worth while."

He found it necessary to shake hands. Cathie, catching some reflection of his earnestness, discovered that she was almost excited. It was an adventure, at least. And there was a queer satisfaction in having put her cards on the table, for once. She hadn't got her foothold here on false pretenses. Jesson had the facts. So far as he and Dennison's were concerned, Cathie Winthrop was real, all the way through.

Presently, under a gray-haired but energetic woman who seemed amazingly sure of what she meant to say and what she wanted done, she took her first steps toward the science of making money. Her ignorance appalled her, as she gained enough insight into the new problem to gauge the depth of her inexperience, but, oddly enough, the discovery added appeal to the enterprise.

She telephoned home that she was lunching downtown, and had her first experience with the employees' club-rooms on the top floor, where an absurd sum bought an amazingly appetizing meal. She was a little afraid of her comrades, however. They seemed to know infinitely more than she did, even the gawky girls whose work certificates were obviously of this year's vintage. Cathie had always made a point of being "nice" to the people who waited on her. It had never occurred to her to envy them.

She was surprised when the store closed. The afternoon had disappeared much faster than any she had spent since the swift, bright days at Exton. She was almost sorry to go home, in spite of a pervading weariness. The sales school was infinitely more inter-

esting than the tempered processes of education in favor at St. Agatha's.

She decided not to tell them at home just yet. They wouldn't understand at all. It would impress them as throwing away all that their sacrifices had bought for her. Of course, sooner or later they'd have to know. But the longer she could postpone it, the better. Jesson had made it clear that she could work "half time," as he called it—from one to five. She could easily account for her absences during those hours. Yes, decidedly it was better to hold back the news until she had made sure that the plan would work, at least.

There was another low-voiced argument after dinner. John Winthrop had docketed the day's grist of bills.

"Dennison's hasn't come in yet," Cathie heard him say. "I can take care of the pressing ones, if we let that stand over."

"But it's more important to pay that," objected Mrs. Winthrop. "It's the only place where Cathie can get what she needs—"

"Can't be helped. Here's a letter from Peters, threatening to sue. And I can't risk that, as things stand. It would just about settle my chance of squeezing through. Dennison's will have to wait, that's all."

A queer little glow warmed Cathie. Dennison's could afford to wait—now.

Pip Gresham spread his hands helplessly. "You don't understand, Cathie; this crazy stunt of yours will absolutely spoil the last chance of bringing him around. When he hears that you're selling things over a counter, like any ordinary—"

Cathie shook her head. "I'm sorry, Pip. I can see how you feel about it."

"How I feel? Do you think I care? Why, it wouldn't matter to me if you—if you went around begging. I mean, it would only make me crazier to take

care of you. I'm not in this at all. It's father. He doesn't understand this modern stuff. He belongs back in the days when they built fences around people and you stayed inside your fence till you died."

"I know, Pip. He'd feel that it degraded me. But it won't make things any worse than they were. He isn't the kind of man to change his mind, and he showed me very, very plainly that he considered me——" She fumbled for the word. "Impossible about expresses it. You'd never persuade him——"

"But I was persuading him." Pip almost waived his protest. "We made a——a gentleman's agreement. I was to let things stand as they were for six months, and he was to reconsider. If he didn't change his mind, then, I was to have a small allowance and do as I saw fit. And now this just ruins any chance——"

"There wasn't any to ruin. He"——she smiled faintly——"he had my number, Pip. He told me that I was an imitation. And I was. You don't think so. But I know. And there was never any question of my letting you quarrel with him over me. I couldn't. So——"

"He told me that, too. I had to listen while he lectured me on social distinctions that were called in a hundred years ago. And I'd begun to make him believe that if there is any such thing as a class division, you're right at the top. And now you go and get a job in a store, like a bookkeeper's daughter! Gee, Cathie, if you'd only told me——"

"It wouldn't have mattered, Pip. I'm all through trying to pretend to be something I'm not. It's done no good. Your father saw through me without trying. I'm going to stop being that sort of a counterfeit, anyway."

"But——"

"Let me tell you something else. When my father found out what I was doing he was terribly upset about it.

He thought it would make his creditors pounce on him if they heard that his daughter was working in a shop. I almost gave it up to please him. But the queer part of it was that his creditors didn't take that view of it at all. The biggest one of all told him that if I'd kept on trying to make a social splash, as he put it, they'd have applied for a receiver this fall. Instead, they've given him an extension and helped him over the hill. You can't begin to realize what a difference it's made to him. He's ten years younger——he's full of fight and courage and——and pep."

"I can see that, but it doesn't help me, Cathie. My father——"

"It couldn't matter to him. He'd made up his mind. And, Pip——it's queer, but since I've been——doing my bit, I've been almost happy again. There's nothing like work to take the sting out of——things. Especially if it's work you can do well. They've increased my pay twice, without being invited, and when Sophie Greenbaum marries, next spring, I'll probably be assistant buyer."

"Then——you don't care any more?" The tone hurt her.

"Pip, I didn't know how to care, before. It's because I care so much that I can keep on saying no. Don't make it too hard for me, Pip."

John Winthrop appeared in the doorway. "Somebody on the phone for you, Cathie. Hello, Pip. Good to see you again."

Cathie left them together, a little relieved at the interruption. There was a whirring rattle in the receiver as she answered, "Ready with Exton," and, before she could recover from the surprise of the name, she heard Governor Gresham's resonant, carrying voice:

"Miss Catherine Winthrop?"

Cathie found her tones unexpectedly under control. She was crisply businesslike with her, "Yes; good evening,

Governor Gresham." But she had a sense of panic which tugged hard at her nerves.

"Is Philip there? I didn't see him before he left, and——"

"Yes, he's here. Do you want to speak to him? Or shall I take the message?"

"I wanted to speak to you first. I have been afraid——"

"That wasn't necessary. I gave you my word. I meant it."

"Exactly. I was afraid that you'd send Philip back again. I am asking you, very humbly, my dear, to forgive us both and try to love us. I should have come to Lakeport to-morrow if Philip hadn't dashed off as he did. I judged you very badly, my dear. I was wrong, and Philip was right."

Cathie's mind raced. Somehow, Pip had convinced him, after all! It was surrender! And then she remembered. If he heard—as Pip had heard—of the demeaning descent into trade, of her service as a mere clerk in a common, public department store! She braced herself. Better tell him now, before he hurt her again.

"I'm sorry to say that you were right, Governor Gresham. And you mustn't change your mind under any misapprehension. I've been working for nearly three months in one of our local stores, and there isn't enough left of my social status to be worth consider-

ing. You made me see that I was a counterfeit, and I've decided that you were right, that it doesn't pay——"

She stopped. It couldn't be laughter that came over the wires. Governor Gresham wasn't capable of anything so plebeian as mirth. And yet——

"My dear girl, do you think I don't know all about it? Don't you see that you've done the one thing that proves I was wrong? I judged you harshly, because I found, on information and observation, that you were devoting all your cleverness to a silly sham of wealth, trying to imitate the shallow, crude people who haven't anything to be proud of except a little money! I saw you let your father bring his business to the edge of bankruptcy so that you could go to fashionable schools, wear costly dresses—that weren't paid for! I called you counterfeit—well, that was just enough. I didn't see, then, that you were merely counterfeiting something counterfeit itself, that the real person under the sham was the girl who could play the game as you've been playing it! I've only tried to secure my boy's happiness. I'm still trying to do it when I ask you to forgive me——"

The pink mist had found its way back into the living room, when Cathie stopped in the doorway, and the universe, as universes should, belonged exclusively to her—and Pip.



SONG

THERE come so many strains of broken music
From lives that dreamed to make a symphony,
But something in them makes my heart remember
The music of the restless, troubled sea.

There come to me so many half-heard whispers
From loves that now the last great word have said,
But something in them makes my heart grow troubled
As in a woodland when the leaves are dead.

GLENN WARD DRESBACH.



The Arrant Rover

By Berta Ruck

Author of "His Official Fiancée," "The Girls at His Billet,"
"Sweet Stranger," etc.

CHAPTER I.

BY the time he was twenty-five, Archie Laverock, the arrant rover, was "through" with girls.

Not angrily so—he wasn't disillusioned, blasé, or bitter at all. Merely he'd had enough of them, thought he, to last his time. The armistice had been for love as well as for war, as far as young Laverock was concerned. Personally, he did not care if he never met another woman.

It was naturally at this juncture that he met her. Unforeseeing and at peace with all his world, the young man tooled along leafy lanes of Surrey in the two-seater. Glossily new it was. The immaculate putty-color of its paint and padding and the silver of its gadgets winking in the sunlight would have taken the eye of any woman on the road. Young Laverock was concerned with the lightness and swiftness of the car, the ease with which it responded to the least touch on the accelerator. Thoughts and eyes free of other preoccupation, he drove, happily—to be pulled up in a second by what was to happen.

So suddenly it leaped into the peaceful lane, May-time hedges, daisied fields, and swaying, sighing pine wood! The crash of human storm, the flash of passion, crude violence, and tragedy! All of it so swift, so startling—

To begin with, the "pup-pup-pup" of a motor cycle, growing more distinct. A haze of dust hastening down the road toward the car, then nearing the crossroads. The appearing figures of a man, riding, of a girl in the side car. The man was heavily built and of middle age; he wore a well-cut, brown, belted coat and a soft hat; the girl was smallish, and crouched down against the breeze, one saw little of her except her tiny hat of brilliant blue, from which there streamed out a veil of equally brilliant tulle. These people talked as the motor cycle dashed up, talked rapidly and simultaneously—

"Quarreling? Married," thought, idly, the arrant rover. His first, distant glance showed him there was something odd about this pair who turned to each other as they sped along and had so much, feverishly, to say.

Then——

The man on the motor cycle, turning once more to the girl in the carrier, leaned over, shot out a hand, seized her by the shoulder and shook her as a terrier shakes a rat. This before the eyes of the young man in the approaching car who, seeing this thing, could hardly believe he was seeing it.

Then he, that hefty brute on the motor cycle, did it again. No mistaking it this time. Shook the girl, in savage anger, so that her hat fell sideways upon her neck and her hair tumbled about her face; *shook* her.

Great heavens!

They were now close upon the car. Young Laverock, horror-struck, staring, caught the voice of the other man, raised, and furious.

"Get out of this. Hear what I say? Get out!"

With a jerk the motor cycle pulled up, the rider flung himself off, went round to the side of the carrier, and caught at the arm of the girl. She shrank aside.

"Get out, I say!" he threw at her. Then, roughly as a teamster might drag at the bridle of a refractory horse, he clutched the slender arm, dragged the girl by force from the carrier, and pushed her to the side of the road. She stumbled and fell against a strip of dusty, clovered turf. Then, in a moment, she picked herself up. She stood, a tiny, forlorn figure in cornflower-blue, against the May-green-and-gold of the hedge, holding out, in a helpless gesture, her hands toward the man—all this in far less time, indescribably, than it takes to tell. Already the brute had grasped the handle bars again, had taken a running step beside the cycle, had thrown himself on with never a glance behind. Sharply he turned off to the right, dashed down a lane between elms.

The girl still kept that gesture of despair toward his departing back, calling him with the turn of her body, the

tilt of her head, as much as with the tone of her voice. Anguished, she sobbed after him one word.

"Arthur!"

He had rattled out of sight even as young Laverock, pulling up the car, had sprung out and come on to the scene.

What else, I ask you, would any young man have done? Here was a girl, brutally treated by something that called itself a man, who deserted her in a lonely lane at crossroads miles from anywhere. The limit! *Shook* her! Turned her out of the side car, Chucked her out upon the road. The absolute limit! Tense with indignation, young Laverock clutched off his cap and strode straight to this damsel in distress. At that minute, he neither knew nor cared who or what else she was, married to that brute, his daughter, or what. It didn't strike him to wonder what "the row" had been about or why she should have been chucked into the hedgerow like a gypsy's discarded tin can. He didn't even—and this was rather worthy of remark in Archie Laverock—he didn't think of noticing whether the girl was pretty or not. The first thing that came into his head, he said, very decisively:

"Can I do anything?"

The girl turned upon him a small, startled face. Before she could speak, another factor was added to the situation. It was a tall, gaunt man in a white, canvas coat, who strode through a gate in the hedge. Only then young Laverock noticed an entrance to a tiny inn, hiding behind great towers of lilac.

"Here," exclaimed this newcomer, very irritably, to Archie Laverock, *"what do you think you're doing? Will you be so good as to clear out o' the way, please?"*

Young Laverock cast upon this individual one swift, detached glance. He disliked the look of him, also the manner. Further, a faint aura of whisky

about him mingled with the sun-warmed arrogance of the lilacs about the door. It was not necessary that the newcomer should have anything to say in this matter of a girl flung aside upon the king's highway. Get her away from here, that was the main thing. Young Laverock, turning to her again, said in the voice of gentle authoritativeness, "Get into that car of mine, won't you? I'll drive you where you want to go."

He believed the girl, still dazed and all taken aback, began to murmur something confusedly about "very kind——"

Then came the "pup-pup-pup" of that motor cycle again. Good Lord! What? Was that chap coming back? *Arthur?* Yes, by jove; here he was, signaling to the girl as he dashed up the road again calling out, "Hi——"

Having practically knocked her down, the brute was now ordering the girl to come back to him, was he?

"Neck!" thought young Laverock, so hot with honest indignation he couldn't think clearly. He was just angry and set. At the back of his mind, lowered a vague determination to come back and settle with those two men afterward. They seemed to belong together. They'd probably both been drinking, he decided in a rush. That was it. Meanwhile the main thing was to get that girl away safely.

Archie Laverock took a half pace backward and held open the door of the little car. A very personable young rescuer he looked, as he stood there, tall and lightly built under the well-worn trench coat, the afternoon sunlight making of his small, smooth head a gilded knob, lighter in tone than the tan of his face. This was clean shaven and pleasant, with a gleam of teeth and eyes, the characteristic, the unmistakable, rover's eyes—which at this point there is no time to describe. We'll come to that later.

"Get in," he said briskly to the girl.

She looked as if she didn't know

whether she were going to laugh hysterically or what, poor, little soul.

"Get in. There. That's right."

She looked back, in a hesitant, over-her-shoulder way at the lilac-embowered inn, but she allowed young Laverock to bundle her, masterfully, into the car. Just as he took the wheel, that brute on the motor cycle dashed up alongside.

"Here, where are you going?" he called out sharply. The car leaped forward as the girl called back, "It's all right, Arthur! So long!" Whether it was in bravado or triumph, young Laverock did not determine. With a curious, little, running laugh in her voice, she added, her words caught away on the breeze, "I finish with you, next time, you know——"

A pretty mild threat, considering what had just happened, thought young Laverock. What on earth had that scene been about, anyhow? It is women who are said to be the inquisitive sex; no woman could have seethed with a more complete curiosity than did this young man who drove the escaping girl. He kept that curiosity strictly behind the mask, pleasant-featured and tanned, of his face. But, would she explain, presently?

Meantime he inquired, perfectly matter-of-fact, "Straight ahead, is it?"

"Yes, straight on, please," replied the meek, little voice of the girl beside him, "if you're going to be kind enough to drive me home."

"Of course. Anywhere you say."

"About two miles straight ahead then, please. Then, when we come to the green between the two ponds, you bear off to the left, and—oh, I'll tell you when we come to it."

"Right."

The little two-seater, brought out on such a different errand, sped forward between hedges which streamed behind in scarfs of emerald or jade, patterned here and there by the golden cascade

of laburnum, the snowdrift of mock orange, the amethyst glow of rhododendrons glimpsed in groves beyond some gate; and as the car hurried smoothly ahead, young Laverock hesitated to speak. He wondered what he ought to say, or if he ought to say anything; whether sympathy were expected or an offer of further help, or whether he had better wait for this poor, little soul beside him to refer to what had happened. Not a word came from her. If she meant him to ignore everything, very well.

Young Laverock possessed a rather exceptional faculty for feeling, guessing, or arriving in some way, very quickly at the preferences of the woman with whom he happened at the moment to be. "What she'd like me to do next," in fact. Few young men, however sterling, are really first rate at this. He, quite shortly, became conscious that the girl beside him wished him to take the initiative. He must mention that quite horrible, little incident on the road outside that peaceful-looking, rural inn.

He did so.

Careful not to look at her lest she should be confused or distressed, he began, still as matter-of-fact as if he were asking if she could drive a car herself:

"I say, I hope very much you didn't mind my butting in like that just now by the inn. It seemed to me the only thing to be done. I hoped it was all right——"

As if he'd had time to hope or think anything so definite.

"Oh, it was so kind of you. Thank you, very much indeed," replied the girl in that primmest of little voices.

Noncommittal in the extreme, her voice. Evidently determined to give nothing away, he thought. Something, however, its least tone did betray. Poor child, she was in the language of past ages, a lady. In that horrible situation, how could she have anything to say to

an unspeakable cad like that bully on the cycle? What was she doing in that *galère*, in that side car, at all? Why wasn't she being looked after better than that? Young Laverock mentally demanded that of the Surrey scenery as framed by the wind shield. What were her people? Presumably he would see her people presently, since she had said "kind enough to drive me home." What were they thinking about?

He next realized the girl herself had a question to ask.

She turned to him the little head, blue as that of a kingfisher in the close, concealing hat. Still demurely, but with an odd touch of something in her voice he could not place, she demanded, "What did you think of it?"

He took his eyes from the evenly rolling-out ribbon of the road ahead. Vivid as a rain-washed, pink carnation, her small face against blue clouds of tulle! But he, disconcerted by the suddenness of her question, had even yet not seen her except as a human being in some unexplained "mess." At a loss for the moment, he marked time by repeating blandly, "Think of it?"

She nodded. She sounded, now, self-possessed.

"Yes, I mean, what did you think was happening? When you saw Arthur Seymour fling me out of that car on to the road just now? Weren't you *surprised*?"

"*Surprised*! I should rather think so."

"Yes, I saw you were frightfully angry. Sweet of you! I suppose any decent sort of man would have been," she took up quickly. Her soft voice had a "twittering" quality now, like that of some small, disturbed bird. "It must have looked rather—ghastly. To come upon it suddenly like that! What did you make of it? You saw a girl like me—if you noticed what I was like at all——"

Here Archie Laverock did for the

first time glance at this stranger from the point of view of what she was like to look at.

She was pretty. By jove, she was more than pretty in her brilliantly blond style. Not a curl showing now. She sat with hands to the veil she was readjusting. A riotous wisp of it blew across her face and chin. Above the veil, below the brim of the casque, sparkled the bluest eyes Archie Laverock had ever seen. These were fringed by lashes, long, curly, and black. Too black. A pity, thought young Laverock, that this wonderfully pretty, little creature had so overdone the make-up!

Like most men of his day, he had absolutely no objection to a touch of the black and pink, the cream and carmine, which a woman "puts on" in the same spirit as she stitches the vividly colored, satin flower to her hat. Either is to adorn, not to deceive. Further, he was educated to realizing that with a certain type of French hat or of vivid evening gown, the wearer must accentuate her own coloring, or "put out" the whole look of what she wears and become inartistic, incongruous, too conspicuous. The love of any kind of beauty, whether of art or nature, presupposes a gift for the *apropos*; or, the right thing at the right time and place. But never gossamer silk stockings, say, with golf kit. The woman who had taught young Laverock so much, she went out of his story long before we begin it, would have shuddered at the thought of doing up one's eyelashes "in threes" with a thick, black bead of mastic at the end of each trio, before going for a spin in the country. Why had this girl done that? All wrong! All—

Here a fresh toss of the breeze sent that end of tulle across his own face, bringing him a faint waft of scent. Different from the all-permeating perfume of that afternoon, from the breath of a myriad growing things, young grasses, young beech leaves, young uncurling

bracken fronds, that, mingling with the pervading, the unceasing sigh of her pine woods, makes the essence of Surrey in spring. This other scent he could have named, having once sent a huge bottle of it as a thank offering to a V. A. D. girl who had nursed him.

It was *Mysterieuse*. Appropriate enough to this other girl!

She caught the veil back, tied it under her little, egg-shaped chin. Perfect, that pink oval of her jaw, the whole lower part of her face exquisitely chiseled and defined. Too defined. Here again she'd overdone it. Her short upper lip had its curve violently exaggerated with sticky pigment of a peculiarly dark brown-red, with which was accentuated also the shell-like detail of her nostrils. Yet, for all that, the authentic prettiness of her, the fresh youth, were things to hit a man between the eyes or to the heart.

Archie Laverock was thus hit, and at that moment.

Down he went like a ninepin to this so-far-nameless young woman, her whole being surrounded by a puzzle, as was her face, by the mist of cornflower blue she had at last folded to lie firm and flat above her eyes, against her cheeks. In that headdress she looked a fair and subtle sphinx-girl indeed, and he was her captive as much as he had ever been that of any woman. He, as it often happens, did not know this was the case until later, ah, much later on.

Meantime her voice persisted in his ear. "Yes, I want to know exactly what you thought was happening just now? It might have looked like several things, mightn't it?" She seemed to put the words into the mouth of the young man at the wheel. "For instance, did you see me as one of those girls who stay at country houses and who play bridge recklessly and lose, and simply have to have money to meet their debts of honor, and get into the toils—toils is the

right word, isn't it—of money lenders? Did you see Arthur as the relentless money lender whom I was trying to implore to give me a little more time?"

In sudden, inexplicable relief that this was no worse, young Laverock exclaimed, "That was it, was it?"

Without answering this, the girl twittered on, "Or, did you think it was a drama of jealousy? Arthur, my exacting fiancé——"

Before he knew, young Laverock had blurted out in consternation, "Is he your fiancé?"

"Did he look like that? Or more like my rather elderly, suspicious husband?"

"Your husband? No! I mean, is he? Is he?"

"Couldn't you," the sphinx-girl countered, "couldn't you have seen that?"

Young Laverock had no breath to say that at his first glimpse of the pair on the motor cycle and in the side car, he had taken them, vehemently wrangling as they were, for a married couple. In fact, this he forgot in his shock of genuine horror. This sweet, little thing? A lady, a perfectly nice girl, a mere child, tied to that drunkard hound of a husband who knocked her about?

Curt with anger and shock, he blurted out, "How should I have known what to think?"

"Well, think now. Reconstruct the scene in your mind. Will you? I want you to. I've a reason," put in the girl's quick, birdlike voice. "Tell me what it looked like. 'A drama of love and jealousy?' 'The Interrupted Elopement?' 'In Shylock's Grip?' Which?"

But at least five seconds before she stopped speaking, the young man's mind had leaped to the meaning of all this.

"Ha, you've been pulling my leg," he cried out with a sudden, boyish grin which creased his tanned cheeks into two, deep dimples and showed the even line of his strong teeth, white as the

split halves of almonds. "I see it now! I see!"

Her eyes danced, flashed into his. "Yes, but do you?"

"I do." He laughed out. "Of course. Ass that I was not to spot the camera in the hedge! Must have been clicking away all the time there, wasn't it? No wonder your friend in the white coat got so furious with me for butting in! Of course! Films! Cinema acting! You were detailed to put through, or whatever they call it, a scene for a film play!"

She nodded delightedly. "You've guessed it at last, have you? It was really almost as filmy as the film itself, the way you swooped down because you thought I was in difficulties and carried me away before I could dash into the inn for a dab of cold cream to take off my make-up!"

"I'm awfully sorry, but——"

"Oh, I loved it!" the film heroine assured him. "Sydney'd just finished for the day. He was the operator, the man in the white coat. Old Arthur, good, old has-been, awfully good-natured, was my husband, in the play. He had to desert me brutally at the crossroads, where he imagined I had arranged to meet his good-looking, young cousin, only of course he'd got *him* gagged and bound in the cellars of the Unicorn since daybreak, and, oh, well, you'll have to go to the show next month and see the whole story. There's miles, I mean, there's reels and reels of it. 'The Billionaire's Bride,' it's called. No, I forget the exact name. Oh, but you've *no* idea what the poor, young bride, me, has to go through. Locked up, starved, escaping through windows, dropping from airplanes. Quite enough to put anybody off married life," she twittered blithely, "if that one film gives you the least foreshadowing? Or aren't you married, Mr.—don't you think it would be a good idea if we knew each other's names?"

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"Heaven forbid! I mean, that I should ever be married," the rover laughingly explained to her. "My name's Laverock."

"Captain——"

"Not any longer, thanks be."

"Mr. Laverock. Rather pretty. It means 'A lark,' doesn't it?" she tossed off lightly.

She had dropped her camouflage of primness now. Having "sized-up" this young man's quality as "a gentleman and nice," she talked with the bubbling gayety of a schoolgirl on holiday, but also with the touch of imperiousness which marks the woman sure of her reception. She'd had her share of petting and spoiling wherever she'd been, he could have told. The note of "the only girl" sounded in her voice as she ordered, prettily, "Tell me about yourself. What do you do now? Nothing, I suppose."

The young man gave a rueful grunt. "Nothing? As it happens I work like a slave. Lucky to get the chance to. There are no jobs in this blessed country any more. Anyhow not for fellows like me who've had five years cut straight out of their lives just at the time when they're supposed to be learning how to make their bread and butter."

"Your bread and butter," the girl took up on an amused note, "includes quite a decent, little car of your own. She runs deliciously."

"She does, but—oh, heavens, did you think this was my own car?" retorted the man at the wheel with a chuckle for the mistake which had been made more than once in the course of his new career. "A bad guess, my dear lady. This is not the fruits of the job, I can tell you. This is the job, itself."

"You mean you sell cars?"

"I'm attached to a firm that does," he explained. "The eldest son there was

a pal of mine on the Somme. He was very decent, indeed, to me after I came out of hospital when the doctor told me I'd got to have life in the open for a couple of years. He, my pal, suggested that I should take on this job, trying out the cars for various clients, so here I am. This is the maiden trip of this little car. Rather an eventful one, is it not?"

"I hope I brought her luck," said the girl musingly. "You know how superstitious we theatrical people are about mascots and dreams and the lucky day of the week and all that sort of thing."

The tone in which she said "we theatrical people" was delightful. What? New, he thought. He was ready to bet that this child, she didn't look more than nineteen, had not been very long on either the stage or the screen. Yet, where had he seen before that egg-shaped face, those daintily defined features, given character by the smile of schoolgirl enjoyment which danced from big eyes to curly mouth? Her portrait must have been in some recent *Eve* or *Tatler*, he thought. Gently he reminded her——

"Were you going to let me know your own name?"

She made a tiny, stagy pause.

Then came the announcement which drew from the young man a "By jove!" of impressed recognition. For with a tremor in her voice of genuine delight, showing how still fresh to her was the bloom on the golden fruit, she uttered a name familiar that spring to all breakfasting England; all, that is over three million people who took in a certain illustrated paper.

She said, "I am Lucy Joy."

CHAPTER II.

Like the rest of the public, young Laverock had stared, two months before, at the big, half-tone photograph in the *Daily Periscope* of the girl who

had won their "Prettiest English-woman" competition.

Miss Lucy Joy, First prize. One thousand pounds.

"Easy money for just sending in a snapshot and then attending the judges' lunch at the Berkeley," had been the comment of his pal, the son of that motor-car firm who had got him his job. "Let's have a look at the young woman. H'm. I don't see she's anything so desperately wonderful, according to this. Not even as pretty as the second-prize girl. Nose too short. Not a patch on the *Daily Mirror* winner."

"You can't tell by a picture," Archie Laverock had said. "Probably her coloring's half the battle. It is with most English girls."

"Most of these wenches here seem to me as plain as Potiphar's wife," grumbled Archie's pal.

He was one of these men invariably captious and grudging on the subject of women's looks, being himself without an isolated advantage of feature or figure. Archie Laverock, on the other hand, was one of those who honestly consider that practically any girl is attractive, that most are definitely pretty, and that there isn't such a thing as a really ugly woman to be found in this world. For him, to be feminine at all, was to be desirable. It is your handsome critic who is indulgent. With all his faults the rover was a creature not—unsightly.

"Bit of a job, selecting the first ten out of this bunch," he'd mused over the full page of portraits of the "best types of Britain's girlhood," and then, picking out the nicest-looking nymph of the great ten: "I'm bothered if I know how I should have voted. I wonder what sort of girl this Miss Lucy Joy is to talk to, and what sort of people and home she's got, and all that sort of thing."

Now, two months later on he was to know.

In wondering what the prize beauty's home and family would be like, he had certainly not formed any mental picture of the ménage into which he found himself practically tumbled by the hand of fate that afternoon, directly the car had drawn up, on the grassy side track sprinkled with fir cones, outside a gate with white palings.

Outside was the Surrey wild; turf, broom, what-would-become-heather, new bracken, sandy slopes, and, all beyond, the pine trees, seeming to shake slow, dark heads over the ways of the world and to sigh without ceasing, "Hush—hush——"

"Here's the place," said Lucy Joy, pointing to the gate.

Inside the palings was a gay-enough little oasis. Presently, to Archie's eyes, it resolved itself into a flower garden, a lawn, a rockery bright with Alpine plants, a flight of shallow, red steps leading up to a wooden bungalow, painted sky-blue, but half hidden by a tangle of light creepers, variegated honeysuckle, sweetbrier rioting up to the chimneys of the place. At the first glance, however, the confusing color and flutter were not to be disposed of in these literal terms; the place was just a bouquet ablaze with pinks and blues and golds and oranges and mauves. The eye would have been puzzled to distinguish between glowing splashes of color which blazed between the bushes!

A huge, poppy-patterned tent parasol was set up on the lawn between the flower beds. Under this, on the backing of smooth, green grass, lay a spread of cushions boldly striped in lemon and amber and black which made a brighter contrast of the rest. There were, besides, chintz-padded basket chairs and Indian rugs; a dazzle-painted workbox from which effloresced a pinky heap of flimsy needlework; a half-knitted jumper in Russian-ballet shades; a flung-aside "Pan," its

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pages aflutter in the breeze; a couple of paper-jacketed novels; a canary-and-cream check tea cloth was laid beneath the gleam of silver, of flowery china; around it were grouped wind-tossed clusters of women's summery frills. Above all sounded the gay commotion of voices, twittering as zestfully, as incessantly as the birds then in full spring song.

"Ah! They're in. They're all at tea in the garden. Good! Come and be introduced to the family," said Lucy Joy.

Tossing aside the dust rug, she skipped from the car, small fingers resting for an instant in the long, tanned ones held out by the rover, just the fateful fraction of a second quicker than he'd shown this ordinary attention to any girl yet. He noticed it himself.

Quickly he followed at the gray suede heels of the tiny, blue-wrapped figure stepping down the path, past huge, blossoming trees, past budding larkspurs that towered above her, round the corner of the lawn.

"Hullo," she called in a tone that was as the clapping of pretty hands by some Eastern queen to summon slaves.

They were about her immediately. In a second she seemed to be surrounded by a crowd of people and a pack of up-leaping, welcoming dogs. The bright hubbub of voices broke out at once.

"Here she is! Already——"

"My pet! We never heard the car until——"

"Hallo, Lu! Hul-lo——"

Miss Lucy Joy disengaged herself from the embrace of another small, golden-haired girl in a very French summer frock of rose-mauve, dappled with big, sulphur-yellow moons, and turned to her guest, the rover, hovering on the outskirts of the group. Already to his dazzled vision it had dwindled into a trio only. Two frocks and a suit of flannels. Three dogs, an

Airedale, a white West Highland terrier, a small, black, fluffy puppy. One cat. A parrot sitting on the top of its cage, set near the sundial.

"My menagerie!" announced Lucy Joy in imperious, spoiled-schoolgirl tones. She seemed suddenly "herself" as she had not yet appeared to the arrant rover. "This," she added to the group, "is Mr. Laverock, who has driven me home. Mummie——"

To Archie's amazement there turned to him with smiles the blond "girl" in the rose-mauve muslin. How do some women do it? For, yes, she was the mother of this five-foot-nothing of femininity who obviously owned the place. Anybody would have taken her for a sister only a few years older.

"My autie Madge, Mrs. Harrison!"

This lady again might have been the married sister of both, slim and petite, charmingly dressed in black and white jazz voile and a big hat with a transparent orange halo through which one caught softened peeps of just the profile of the celebrated niece. Good looks all over the family!

"Frankie. My little brother——"

How obviously so! The last-introduced member of the family was a creature with the silk-smooth, peach-pink face of a very young lad topping the body of a big man, still growing. In spite of the white flannels which shrank away from the large ankles and wrists and throat of him, any one could have "seen" him in his usual wear of blue naval cloth, white collar, and black tie. The Snotty Unmistakable grinned from eyes blue as his sister's and rang in the deep, but still unsettled, voice with which he sang out, "Well, darling, brought home one of your many husbands to-day?"

"This isn't one of my husbands at all, as it happens. This is the gallant rescuer who—well—End of part eight; part nine will follow immediately. We'll tell you all about that presently.

Tea first, *now*," ordered the girl, dropping down among the prismatic cushions of the chair which had just been vacated by the coltish limbs of her brother. "Frankie, seize this." She took off and tossed into his hands the amusing little casque and veil of cornflower-blue; her silky shock of hair gleamed forth, palest gilt in the sun. "And this, dear——"

This was the blue wrap; her frock below showed the slimmest of white arms through pearl-colored Georgette.

"Now!" she sighed, content. "Mummie, did old Sir Stick-in-the-mud send over those peaches? Good! Down, Puppety, down! Auntie, make Mr. Laverock begin with sandwiches. I'm sure he's fainting with fatigue and exhaustion after all the shocks and spasms of this hectic afternoon."

"Are you acting for the films, too, then, Mr. Laverock?" inquired the girlish "mummie" with so much of the voice and mannerism of her daughter even more lavishly italicized that Archie nearly laughed aloud.

"No, I'm not in that line at all," he began his explanation. "As a matter of fact, I didn't know your daughter was, either, at the time. I just butted in because I imagined she was in difficulties."

"In difficulties! Oh, Lu! Darling! These dreadful people you have to work with," cried mummie, stricken. "Oh, *what* was it?"

"Mummie! It wasn't anything!"

"But Mr. Laverock *said*——"

"It was all my silly idiocy," began Archie again. "I——"

"No, I'm sure it wasn't. *You'd know*," he was assured by the auntie, with the look of one who knew this sort of man from the other. "What was it? Who was annoying her?"

"Nobody at all. My poor lambs, I wish you'd listen instead of always talking down everybody!" the girl exclaimed petulantly. "Can't you under-

stand that I was just finishing rehearsing 'A Honeymoon Horror,' or whatever it is, with Arthur Seymour, when Mr. Laverock came——"

She twittered through the breathless explanation, its end cut off by guffaws from the brother and a chorus from mummie and auntie of, "Well, but I think that was perfectly sweet of him!"

"Yes, rushing in——"

"Where angels fear to tread," from Frankie, immediately clapping an apologetic hand over his own pink mouth. "Never mind; I'm just as grateful to you as if my pet *had* been in need of help, Mr. Laverock! By the way, Laverock—Madgie, didn't we know a Captain Laverock in the R. E.?"

"My uncle," began Archie, "was in service——"

"Of course, we knew him quite well! How small the world——"

The parrot contributed a piercing screech, harped on the wires of its cage, and gurgled: "What a life! What a life!"

"We shall all have to go on the films presently, if we want to have anything to eat!" declared the Snotty through a mouthful of *éclair*. "Mummie, I'm going to chuck the navy.. Did I tell you, mummie, darling? Going on the films with my well-known sister. They'd have me in a minute, give me sixty quid a week for just coming on and looking like Lu!"

Here a large wink from the sea-blue eye nearest the visitor.

"I say, wilt try one of these chocolates, Mr. Laverock?" He handed a satin box rather larger than a hassock. "Are these from the infatuated general, Lu? What? A judge. I shall wrangle him to——"

"Frankie, don't talk the whole time; nobody else gets a word in!" remonstrated the pretty aunt. In vain. The Snotty's half-broken baritone held forth.

"What it is to be a celebrity's brother! By Jove, d'you know I can jolly well

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do anything I like in our wardroom these last two months, just because everybody in the ship, from the skipper down, is so mad keen to get an introduction! D'you know what I've planned for the next Albert Hall dance? I'm going as Miss Lucy Joy, the *Daily Periscope* beauty-competition winner. Anybody'd take me for her in a dinky hat and a side curl and an evening skirt by Elspeth Phelps; wouldn't they take me for her, mummie?"

"Oh, yes! Wouldn't they take him for me!" in mock indignation from the girl. "Especially about the hands and feet! Wouldn't they!"

"I can get into your shoes, miss! Bet you I can get into your shoes——"

"Oh!"

She and the sixteen-year-old brother squabbled and ruffled it like two fighting blue tits; Archie, amused and enjoying, tried to keep up with their laughing dispute through the piercing cries of the parrot, the barked appeals of the puppy for more cake, and the two simultaneous monologues now in full swing from mummie and auntie, each directed at the guest.

"Isn't it wonderful about Lucy!" the mother began, as if to an old family friend. "You see, it's not only looks. It is talent, as well. Everybody knows it's talent. Everybody says she's the coming ingénue——"

The aunt was prattling proudly. "I shall always say I began it. I did say, 'We might as well send in a photograph of Lucy; she's much prettier than any of those pictures in Elwin Neames' of languishing minxes wandering in hayfields dressed in chiffon motor veils, and they all laughed; but I would send it, the photograph Frankie took of her in the punt. Just an amateur snapshot! But I always say——"

"You know," the mother babbled, "none of us had ever been on the stage or anything! Just the most ordinary people who've always gone straight into

the army or the navy because their people have never done anything else!"

Archie nodded; his own people had been like that.

"No influence or anything, ours hadn't. Just were beloved by their men, did their duty, got killed very bravely, dear things, and all that. Nobody *ever* heard of any of her family, either, on her father's side," the aunt told Archie, "or ours. We'd never any 'pull;' never *knew* anybody more important than just the colonel of the regiment. And now! Everybody! Staff, foreign office, people in Downing Street. The world and his wife! Literally everybody in London wants to know us!"

"No end of grand people suddenly remembering they were at Sandhurst with poor Tom or that they'd once met us when we went over to see Frankie at Dartmouth," took up the mother. "The child goes everywhere, invited everywhere. Flocks of people as rich as Cræsus, yes, and nice people, too, making such a fuss over her! Ever since the portrait came out in the papers and the interviews and the paragraphs about all those offers from cinema firms! It's been almost too much. She scarcely has a moment to herself apart from her work. Never was a girl so fêted, on the stage or off. For the last two months she's been just the rage!"

This Archie Laverock could believe. He glanced at this household idol sitting among her cushions with the wind in her hair, the sun on her face, painted, yet unspoiled; her brother was still teasing her, but in all adoration; the dogs at her feet still kept worshipful eyes fastened upon her; still, still her mother and aunt sang her praises, and the young man, listening, was taken back to that moment when he had found himself putting out a hand to help her alight from his car, more quickly than even yet he had ever performed that courtesy for any woman.

Suddenly, instinctively, he knew that for this cynosure-girl here there must be always a "surround" of masculine hands held out just that quarter second more readily than for other women. Hands, waiting eagerly beside the car, the launch, the doors of the Ritz; hands to hold her wraps, to help put her furs about her, to proffer sheaves of flowers. Hands always, always, at once. She carried the atmosphere of that sort of thing about with her, he thought; was it because she was the beauty-prize winner? Or was she the beauty-prize winner because of it?

"Prring!" sounded a telephone bell through the open window of the blue-painted bungalow. Frankie broke off his teasing to bolt in three strides up the shallow steps; then bellowed back through the garlanded window: "It's for you, Lu! London call. Something about that supper party——"

"Another supper party," sighed the mother in pretended disapproval as the girl sprang up and disappeared. "'What a life' indeed! And we thought we'd a gay time as girls, Madgie. Even though we were always as hard up as we could stick and never seemed to go out with anybody except young men who hadn't a penny, either, we didn't, did we? As for these sumptuous restaurants and princely presents——"

"A brooch made out of 'his' regimental badge and a sixpenny ice at Gunter's——"

"And as for clothes! Blouses by Hourne and Bollingsworth, skirt by Nurse!" enlarged the mummie, who was a girl in King Edward's time. "D'you know, this summer is literally the first time I've ever had on a tub frock out of South Molton Street!"

She gazed happily down at the rose-mauve muslin with its yellow moons, and added a parenthesis which the rover had already heard from more than one or two or three of her sex:

"I can't think why I'm telling you all

this, Mr. Laverock, but we seem to have known you for years! The first thing the darling said when she got the *Periscope* check was, 'Nice clothes for all of us.' And we shopped—oh, a man," she sighed faintly, "could never understand *quite* what that means."

"Wilt smoke?" broke in the voice of Frankie, returning with a silver box to proffer. "These are from another of Lu's latest. I shall never have to buy another cigarette! What it is to be——"

"Of course, now the very best houses are all clamoring to dress her," from auntie. "The *simplest* things, of course, always the dearest!"

"The fewer you go, the higher!" declared the irrepressible Frankie, while his girlish parent added, "Clothes were never as becoming as they are now. That's *partly* why the nowadays girl is so awfully pretty; don't you think so, Mr. Laverock?"

Here Archie Laverock, while she paused for breath, got his first chance. One compliment after thirty-five scores higher than two proposals at twenty, as he'd been told. He gave a telling glance at mummie, fair-haired, animated, engaging, and he said quietly, but with aim, "What I think is, Mrs. Joy, that the time for a girl to start training for beauty competitions is—*years before she gets born!*"

Flushed, laughing disclaimers from Mrs. Joy. "Oh, *hasn't* he kissed the Blarney stone! Flatterer! How silly! To a *passée* old thing like me!" But he knew that he had pleased. He meant to. He had a position to keep as friend of this merry, feather-pated family.

All these other men who fluttered about this girl, who rang her up, made offerings, burned incense, how many of these were allowed, as he had been, to follow at those tiny, those gray-suede Louis heels of hers right into the heart of this flowerful toy paradise that was her home?

To that question an answer of sorts came at that moment.

It took the form of the hoot of a klaxon horn; the appearance beyond the shrubs and palings of another motor car. A big, green Rolls it was, which banked up over the turfy ruts, driven by the smartest chauffeur who ever showed a cockade on his cap, a car containing four fat old men.

These were not the words in which others would have described the four immaculately turned-out gentlemen of mature age and distinguished appearance, men honoring the services and the bar, who presently alighted and walked up the path. This was merely the hasty and ill-considered first impression of young Laverock as he sprang to his feet and reconstructed the setting of chairs and cushions on the sunny, colorful lawn. Four fat old men—

"Oh, it's the admiral!" exclaimed mummie, agitato, with a forward flutter of rose-mauve draperies, auntie following her in a flash of magpie black and white.

"Oh, how nice of you to come! And Sir George, isn't it—no; Sir John, Sir John—I don't know *why* I always mix you all up! And General Gaynes, of course; how do you do? How do you do? Oh, yes, Lucy's in; oh, I don't know what her engagements are; don't ask *me*!" A nervous laugh here; mummie evidently not at her ease with the admiral.

Yet he looked jovial enough of his four-square type. His "no-nonsense-about-it" eye was as blue as Frankie's. In fact, he might, thirty-odd years ago, have looked not unlike young Frankie Joy. The sea sets her hall mark early. To-day the characteristic Snotty-complexion of cream and rose was a mottled blend of brick dust and gooseberry. Gone was the coltish lilt of the limbs, the swing and poise of slender flanks.

He bulged. But his suit, blue serge with a thin white line, was very perfect. So were his boots, his spats, the white slip to his waistcoat, his tie, his black-pearl pin, his dove-gray hat, cocked just a trifle over one eye. In that eye and in those of his friends, the general, gray-green, Old Bill mustache, and three chins; of the legal light, Sir John, monocle and no neck; and of the fourth, one of these old limpets who stick on everywhere because the others have—in the eyes of all was a look of purpose. To see Miss Lucy Joy, Archie knew it. That's what they'd come for. To fetch her away blatantly.

"Sure, quite sure, you've had tea?" twittered mummie. "Then—Lu! Lucy! Darling!"

The parrot on the top of its cage echoed piercingly: "Lu! Lucy! Darling!"

"Be quiet, Polly! Frankie, bring out some drinks! Frankie! Lucy, what are you doing, my pet? Come out!"

"Can't, mummie!" floated forth the clear, petulant voice from the second story. "How can I possibly come out with my face all over whitewash? Frighten the admiral."

"I say! What a horrible idea! What are you whitewashing your face for, Miss Lucy?" The admiral lifted up a resonant, indulgent voice. "'Painting the lily,' eh? Why whitewash?"

"Because I must take my make-up off with something. It's *really* 'the very best face cream.' At least I say it is, in the advertisement I signed for it!" The imperious treble floated out again, to mingle with the clinking of glasses and siphons on the tray now being carried out by Frankie, a Frankie almost unrecognizable from the breezy chatterbox of five minutes before. Meek as a maid, mute as one of the cushions!

Young Laverock, too, clad in the whole armor of restrained deference,

decorated by much "Sir"-ing of his seniors, was hiding thoughts which would have shocked and hurt those who know only the more charming attitude of the young knight toward the scarred warrior.

Nothing can be sweeter than the uplifted, hero-worshipping glance of youth to those on the pedestal of years; on the other hand, who can show a more pitiless searchlight stare than youth for age seeking equal terms in the lists?

"Where's Frankie?" screeched the parrot. "What a life!"

What the something, thought Archie Laverock, did these silly old buffers mean by bursting in on a party which was enjoying itself? Spoiling everything, because nobody there wanted them. Turning the bubbling chatter of mummie and auntie into brightly mechanical faking. Shutting up himself and the boy! Hating them, too, that he felt, somehow.

A woman had once told him, Laverock, that it always amused her to see the "dog" of fifty and over confronted by subalterns and undergraduates. She'd said, "The dowager beauty may feel in eclipse beside this season's pretty débutantes, but, oh, Archie, the acute discomfort displayed by her husband in the presence of hundred-per-cent young men! It's pathetic."

Pathetic? Ridiculous, decreed Archie, that they couldn't dodder off home now, in time to see their grandchildren put to bed, instead of—

"We'd planned a little spree, if your mother will let you come. So hurry up, Miss Lucy!" the admiral called again from Archie's abdicated chair. "Oh, yes, my dear Mrs. Joy, I have a note for you from my sister to certify that the chaperoning element will be in full force, ha, ha! We'll look after Miss Lucy, I promise you. We'll take the very best care of her." Then louder: "Early dinner quite informally at my brother-in-law's little place

near Maidenhead. Then on to Murray's, as it's going to be such a delightful evening. The river should be charming; and you said you loved dancing in the open!"

Pleased, pretty laughter from within. "But I'm supposed to be joining Lady Richbourne's party for supper at the Carlton."

"Do it easily, do it easily," called back the well-preserved old soldier sitting next to Mrs. Harrison. "Just time for a dance each, and we'll run you back to town on the dot. So put on your prettiest bib and tucker—"

"My pink-and-silver lace?" coquetishly from the window.

Chorus of elders below: "Charming! Or why not the delightful little white, gauzy affair that we'd the pleasure of seeing last Wednesday—"

"Or that blue *dernier cri* you wore at the rehearsal of your 'Spring Song' film, Miss Lucy!" suggested the admiral.

Him Archie considered rather worse than ridiculous.

These elderly "bloods!" On terms of discussing her pretty frocks with a girl like that! Taking her to dance at Murray's! That apoplectic Leviathan with one foot in the grave, and the other, probably, gouty! All of them waiting for her blandly and complacently, as if they were the playfellows and contemporaries and everybody else a negligible quantity? Why? Why?

Just because they'd the chance to "do" her as she should be done. They'd the money. They'd the position. They, the old men, had been able to stop at home in positions of secure authority, piling prosperity on prosperity, while young men, cutting money-making possibilities clean out of their own lives, were keeping things safe for those overfifties. Up to now, Archie Laverock had considered in pretty poor taste those advertisements in the *Bystander*, boasting that a certain firm "did not

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eater to old men." Now he thought Mr. Dennis Bradley put things too gently on the whole. Besides, of course, every firm catered for old men! For them the best tailors, boot makers, hairdressers. For them the flats in Mount Street, the house in Belgrave Square. For them the chief seats at feasts. For them the shoots and race meetings and the yachts and the gayest time going. For them, above all, the smiling society of the loveliest girls, who might be their granddaughters; yes, all the best of everything was for them, every time. And in the mood of black resentment that it was so, every word of the talk still going on about him added exasperation to exasperation of a normally sunny young man.

The climax was reached when, at the reappearance of Miss Lucy Joy, all brocade cape from her egg-shaped chin to her feet, slim, iridescent, and blue as the bodies of dragon flies, the admiral cried, "Ah, little one!"

Little one! Fatuous old fool, thought Archie.

He knew himself that half this girl's charm lay in the fact she was miniature, almost under life-size. "Just as high as my heart," enthused Orlando. "Little" has been love's superlative ever since. "You little sportswoman," sighs the fiancé of a six-foot hockey player, and she, smiling down at him from the heights, knows that now indeed she has "got" him. Now, Lucy Joy was authentically tiny to begin with. Scarcely an exaggeration, the admiral's comment, when they were all packing into the Rolls: "Almost unnecessary to waste a whole seat on Miss Lucy; she could so easily tuck into the pocket of my coat here!"

No sooner was the motoring party off—pocket Venus attended by her four Titans—than the strain above the garden group lifted at once. Gestures, attitudes, and voices changed with an

abruptness. Frankie dropped into the seat of the legal light, flung his legs over the arm of it, tossed back his cherubically pretty head, and affected to swoon away; mummie and auntie, heaving sighs, partly of awe, partly of relief, turned to the one remaining guest.

"No, don't go, Mr. Laverock; don't! Stay and console her bereaved family now that——"

"If you *don't* mind, just the rest of the cold beef; my sister's rather a dab at salad——"

"I suppose 'Miss Lucy' will now be regaled with rivers of bubbly and all the delicacies out of season," burst out Frankie, whose voice had been unheard except for demure, "Say when, sirs," since the irruption of the distinguished visitors. "What it is to be an old man's darling!"

"Oh, Frankie! Don't put things in such dreadful ways, darling!" besought his mother, gathering up the pink chaos of her needlework from the grass. "It's so nice that the child should get on well with people who are really somebody, sort of, when her work *has* to bring her into contact with all sorts of *impossible* men."

Young Laverock secretly thought he rather preferred Arthur Seymour of the motor cycle and Sydney of the camera to the admiral and his friends.

"Men of that age certainly always do make a pet of Lucy——" auntie began, collecting cushions.

Mummie added, "I don't know how it is!" Her puzzled, infantile gaze turned toward the figure, how gracefully limbed, of the young man left among the empty glasses. He himself had declined a peg. "When I was a girl, I don't think it would have amused me to dance with quite such, I mean men of such *senior* ranks. It's a good thing it does amuse the child. They're able to do so much more for her, of course, and to give her, as she says, a wonderful time. But," she hesitated as

if before saying something daring, "I don't feel I should ever have looked at the admiral and his set when I was nineteen, would you, Madgie?"

Mrs. Harrison said, "I wouldn't look at them now."

For this burst of indiscretion she immediately blushed. "Oh, I oughtn't to have said that! I didn't mean that." But it caused instantly to light up the two boyish faces representing the generation deserted.

Archie Laverock laughed aloud.

Frankie chuckled. "Splendid, auntie! And what a judge! Here's to ourselves, Laverock!" He pushed a brimming, sparkling glass toward the rover. "Wilt imbibe?"

CHAPTER III.

When Archie Laverock drank that toast, blithely tossed off "To ourselves," did he know what it would come to mean? Was it already the challenge of one generation unto another?

Precisely not yet—

For the next two days, the young man's life was full indeed of other things; the comparative merits of the little Standard and the Singer cars between which those clients in Surrey were hesitating, a committee to which he was summoned by the governor at his headquarters, a particularly tiresome complication with a new firm over a matter of repairs. Further, on the Saturday afternoon young Laverock was constrained to skate over to some forsaken spot outside Nottingham to interview a new client who had written. These preoccupations are but lightly touched upon in this story, but they kept the rover heavily busy. Definitely removed, too, from any feminine element, even in his thoughts.

On Sunday, that day of rest, his thoughts wandered back again to the subject of the family at the blue bungalow. Archie discovered that, subcon-

sciously, his mind had made itself up that he would be seeing them all again shortly. How this would come to pass he didn't yet know. Only, somehow, Mrs. Joy had his address taken "in case" she ever had thoughts of setting up a little car for themselves. Not that it seemed likely, when a dozen car owners were always too keen on the chance of driving Lucy. They knew where to find him any time, even if it were not for another week hence.

So he mused, taking his *grasse matinee* luxuriously in his camp bed that Sunday morning, pipe between his lips, Sunday papers, and cup of tea to hand, and a fresh spring breeze blowing in upon him through the open tent flap which showed a sky of riotous blue and white, a stretch of green cricket pitch, the black ribbon of a cinder track, and some long, wooden buildings.

For that year young Laverock and two friends of his had gone into summer camp, composed of three old army tents set up in the field which adjoined a sports ground and pavilion belonging to some London firm. This ground was not far from the railway which took them up to town in twenty-five minutes, and the groundsman, late of the army, cooked their breakfasts and did odd jobs for them. Of the other two, demobilized warriors, Archie's friends, hard-up, cheerful, athletic young Britons of bed-rock type, whose names, if they kept out of casualty lists, would never be seen in any of the papers; one had a job on the railways and the other had returned to London. The camp was, at present, augmented by the brother of this second young man, a captain in Indian army kit who had turned up one night unannounced in search of his relative, only to find that he'd gone off on a walking tour for his fortnight's leave.

"But there's his bed here, if that's any good to you," young Laverock had told the stranger.

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He had replied, "Oh, thanks very much; I'll have it for to-night, if you don't really mind. Very hard to find anywhere to put up, at home, these days——" He had there remained for the last ten days, attaching himself to Archie after the fashion of a lost dog taken into a pleasant family, sharing the evening life of the camp, strumming on an odd banjo found in the pavilion, helping Parkins, the groundsman, to roll the pitch during the day, and finding this Eveless Eden good enough. Indeed, it remains a moot point whether love itself does much to modify the basic fact that the sexes are happier, but for love, when living apart.

This morning it was the young I. A. captain who had brewed early tea for the others, had fetched *The Referee* and *The Observer* and who now for the third time invaded Archie's lair, demanding, "How much longer are you going to lie hogging there, Laverock, you lazy old devil, you? D'you know, it's about twenty-five to ten? Those others have been on the river an hour. Get up! Tumble up! I've got your shower ready for you."

Archie flung a pillow at his head. Followed a dog fight, laughing yells of "Shurrup!" and "Chuck it, you silly ass," more scuffling, Mr. Laverock holed from his couch, and, trailing blue-and-scarlet blankets, dragged struggling out of the tent and toward the open hut, where were kept the roller and the hose.

Inevitable, here, to avoid mentioning yet once again a people who went down, leaving in stone their monument to bodily beauty, beauty not yet surpassed, but often yet attained, as may be seen in swimming baths, on football ground, or the athletic meets to-day. Those ancient Greeks, quoted to the ultimate cliché, but still the standard, would have found little fault with the shape of one young ex-soldier of a later empire; for each of Archie's lines as he

leaped, crouched, braced himself against the jet of icy, bright water, was borrowed centuries ago to express some quoit thrower, some gladiator, some god. The marble cherishes these in every museum in Europe, but does not give us the coloring which Archie Laverock must have shared with those Grecian lads. For, before the splashing made of him a statue of glass, agleam, reflecting from a hundred planes the blue-and-white morning, he showed a glowing tan which ceased, abrupt as a garment, at collar bone and forearm.

Lost upon Archie or his companions would have been any such simile; they had no painter, sculptor, or any of a self-conscious breed among them. It was just two, average, wholesome young men in the full enjoyment of life to whom Parkins, appearing round the corner of the shed from the dressing rooms near which he had his quarters, called out:

"Beg your pardon, gentlemen; Mr. Laverock, sir, you're wanted on the telephone."

"Right-o," called Archie. "Chuck over that towel, Smith."

He wound it for a loin cloth about his waist and dashed to the telephone in the little office at the side of the dressing room.

"Hullo?"

"Hullo, is that you, Laverock?" called back a blithe, half-settled baritone. "This is Midshipman Joy speaking!"

"Ah, good morning, Frankie."

"Good morning. I say, old thing, are you up and dressed?"

"Rather," retorted young Laverock, twisting his towel. "Aren't you?"

"Well, more or less. I say, I've a message for you. From my mater. She says are you by any chance free for lunch?"

"To-day?"

"Yes; *aujourd'hui*."

"Er—I think so," called back the rover, with a hasty mental readjustment of his day of rest. There was to have been tennis with some friends of Captain Smith's near Harrow, but, after all, he had "left it open." Good thing. "Yes, I am free. You coming over to look us up in our lair as you promised you would one day?"

"No, wilt join us in our sylvan retreat instead? My mater hoped you would. Picnic in the pine wood just beyond our bungalow. We've asked the admiral; but mummie and auntie and I thought we'd like somebody of our own, ahem, mental caliber and outlook on life, don't you know, for us to talk to. Could you stick it?"

"Oh, rather! How very kind of your——"

"Good. You'll come. We'll expect you a little before one, then, so that you can lend a hand with carting the viands," called back the Snotty, adding as an afterthought, "I say, Laverock, shall you be able to get over? Trains perfectly hopeless, of course. Have you got a motor cycle or anything?"

"Somebody has," the rover reassured him. For "Somebody" read "Smith."

"Will you thank Mrs. Joy most awfully for me and say I shall love to come? So long!"

Two hours later found him at the picnic.

Picnics, as every hostess knows, may be divided into "rags" and "frosts." This of Mrs. Joy's was unmistakably a frost, owing, one fancies, to the guest of honor, and to the manner in which he spread, foglike, an atmosphere of not-enjoying.

For at a feast in the woods the admiral was emphatically not his jovial, breezy, still-young self. He loathed, for one thing, sitting down on the ground, knowing how difficult it would be to get up again from that slippery-smooth, terra-cotta-colored carpet of

pine needles. He could not find a comfortable-enough trunk against which to lean, nor where to put his feet. The wind blew out match after match, as well as making him feel livery. For what I have mentioned as a "fresh breeze," which tossed the ballooning, white clouds across the blue, which swayed the pine trees, and rippled in the women's pretty frocks, this was summed up as "this beastly east wind" by the admiral. Meals out of doors, too, he loathed. Insensate mania women seemed to have for feeding in the open! To the admiral, there was something positively indecent about it.

All this, you realize, was what he was thinking. I will put this picnic only in the terms of the mental asides of the guests star scattered on the pine needles. For you will not need to be reminded of what they ate and drank nor of the cardboard plates; and the accompanying talk went on as usual about the chances for the Derby and are you going to Henley this year and Pavlova! Oh, isn't she too wonderful, and no we haven't been able to get seats for it yet, and some people who've been, say the acting is *too marvelous* and other people say it's rotten.

None of this was lacking while the admiral continued to tell himself how much better it would have been if the little girl had let him take her off to lunch in comfort at The Riviera, somewhere gay, have a look at Delysia & Co., and then drive her on to bask in the wall garden at his sister's. Just herself and himself. The girl was charming, of course, perfectly charming. The prettiest, little lady he'd met for years; sweet little thing. But her people—— No. The admiral couldn't say he cared much about her people, really. Oh, they were all right, of course. The boy, quite a nice boy, knew how to behave. Silly, little woman, the mother, though. Very silly. Didn't seem to mind letting the girl go about

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anywhere, having all sorts of people to the house. Who the deuce was this young cycle agent, or whatever it was, this young Laverock, who was here again? He was all very well, but was he an old friend or what? Talking to the aunt. The aunt, too, mutton dressed as lamb! A thing the admiral had no damn use for.

Meanwhile the aunt's thoughts: "The admiral's looking at *least* a hundred today; is it because of this attractive lad? People say 'How horrible!' if a woman of fifty who's kept her figure and her skin lets a young man make love to her. They never turn a hair when a man, all bulgy and bald and short-winded tries to marry girls thirty-five or forty years younger than he is! Why? Aren't people funny! What a pity Lucy had to ask him! It would have been so jolly with just that delightful Laverock boy. Lucy never sees a real young man except Frankie. What a waste! Ah, if I were in her shoes, what a glorious time I'd——"

Lucy was thinking, "Why is this being such a *beastly* party? Why doesn't somebody be amusing? Why is the admiral so fearfully cross? Does he mind this new boy? Silly! As if there were anything to mind. As if I should waste a thought on this Laverock young man. Why isn't the young man as nice as he seemed the first afternoon? He's hardly talked to me since we came out. He doesn't seem to look at me at all. Doesn't he—doesn't he think I'm *pretty*, then? Frankie said he sounded so keen to come this morning on the telephone. Has he only come to talk to *auntie*? Some quite young men seem to *like* women who might be their mothers! Isn't he rather dull? Or is he conceited? I wonder if he's *engaged*, even——"

Archie Laverock's thoughts were: "Well, dash it all, why should these elderly Romeos with money have everything else as well? Smith knows

people who know him in Devonshire. Says he's got that topping place, Treillage Court. Fishing and a moor and things. Well? Friends with everybody who counts. Well, what about it? A widower with grown-up daughters! Wouldn't a girl hate it, or would the other make up? Repulsive! Right! Have a shot at it. Have just a *shot* at cutting him out here. What neck, to think of it! No chance, probably, but she's lovely. The little girl's wonderful. Look at her, exactly like a picture in that big hat with the blue cherries, much prettier without the paint, mouth like a petal where its curved in and out. I don't wonder at all the fuss that's been made. That's the kind of girl who has men blowing their brains out in her dressing room because she's turned them down. Nobody like her. She's so different from anybody I've ever struck. Why, she could have anybody she fancied. Marry a duke, that sort of thing. Spoiled, of course. So used to seeing everybody go down at her little feet. Well, supposing somebody *didn't*?"

The thoughts of mummie: "This charming, new boy seems so *shy* with Lucy, he's scarcely ventured a word to the darling yet. Yet, he was so at *home* with us on Thursday night. I wonder when the admiral will go. Fancy, my poor Tom would be his age now, if he'd lived. I can't imagine him. Wasn't the chicken salad *nice*? And why wouldn't he have any more of this cup? I wonder when the admiral will go?"

Finally, these were the thoughts of Mr. Frankie Joy: "Always a ghastly washout, mixing up friends at court with your *friends*! The old boy's fed to the teeth. I expect he feels it chilly or something in this darned wood, I think I'd better suggest our adjourning now. Mummie!"

The adjournment to the blue bungalow garden in its sunny hollow, well

out of the wind, was certainly a success as far as the admiral's comfort was concerned. Here he had a seat, warming as the sunshine, too, here was a distinctly additional sweetness toward him in the manner of Lucy Joy.

"Mummie! The admiral hasn't seen the new Arbuthnot photographs of me that came yesterday! Oh, yes; they're rather good, we think. Frankie—no! I'll fetch them."

She stepped across her dogs and skipped up the shallow, brick steps between the mauve-and-white cushions of rock plants, presently returning with hands and arms full, not only of the huge, brown, cardboard envelopes, but of various framed photographs as well.

"Here they are! And I've brought the Bassano ones that mummie likes better, so that you can compare them; and here's the Keturah Collins for you to see how it looks in the lovely, silver frame you sent——"

Her talk was now all for the admiral. She knelt in little-girl fashion on the grass at his spats, holding out for his inspection, one by one, the portraits. All had appeared or would appear in the weekly papers, elaborately finished, posed, retouched out of all spontaneity, but still her.

"Miss Lucy Joy, England's loveliest cinema star, in her charming Surrey home. 'A thing of beauty and a Joy.'"

"'We only count the sunny hours'; Miss Lucy Joy at the Sundial," graceful even in odiously pseudo-Greek draperies, and tango shoes as from Raynes.

"Ah! Very pretty! Very pretty! Charming. Delightful expressions," or "This is just you, Miss Lucy." Her middle-aged admirer approved each in turn. "And which am I to be allowed to carry away?"

"Choose," cooed the girl.

He chose. "Yet ah! that spring should vanish with the rose," a study

of Miss Joy musing among the narcissus, at Kew, and lent his fountain pen for her to autograph it in immense, curly writing. "Yours very sincerely, Lucy Joy, otherwise 'Little One!'"

After which, from the admiral's hands, the portraits were passed to the younger man. Archie Laverock permitted himself a polite, "Ah, that's very good" and "I think that is the best, myself, the one you chose, sir."

The peculiar gift, already remarked upon, of guessing what the woman in question would like him to do next, this gift took the form of a whisper to him that what the girl expected was for him, Archie Laverock, to beg for an autographed photograph for himself. It would have been only the natural thing to do. She was the most-photographed girl in the country at that moment. Her post bag bulged daily with letters from the public begging for a photograph, or for her to sign the picture post-card portrait sent therewith; everybody knew that. Yes, it would have been natural enough for Archie to make the request.

He did not make it.

Instead, he collected the sheaf and said to the girl, "Let me take these back into the house for you."

"Oh, you don't know where they go, Mr. Laverock. I took some of them off the drawing-room mantelpiece. I hate having things put back in odd places," she twittered importantly, and she skipped after him, all the blue cherries a-bob on the brim of her big, garden hat.

"What a world," croaked the forgotten parrot on his cage.

In the pretty drawing-room, all chintz and luster and fashion papers, the lattice windows were so long and flung so wide that the room was as full of fresh air and flower scent as was the garden outside. But in that room, there stirred suddenly another atmosphere. The clash of personality

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against personality, the intangible "on guard" of the duel between man and maid, the unspoken "Now! You'd have it all your own way, would you? Would you? Would you?"

Archie Laverock suddenly remembered a woman at a dance, oh, right back in 'sixteen that must have been, who had spoken of a curious phase through which some friendships pass; a time when it's too soon for personalities, too late for weather-and-theater talk. At that intermediate stage the people sometimes become senselessly, outrageously rude to one another.

And at this moment the young man realized he longed to give tongue in some wounding brusquerie. He was almost, yes, certain, he surprised that same wish in the eyes of the girl.

But she only said, "Oh, put that oval frame on the silver table here; that's where it lives," in the tone of a profiteer's wife directing the new parlor maid. Curt tone, unpretty manner, they did not become the beauty girl. She did not know it, but at that moment her whole tiny person seemed to cry aloud that she was meant for gracious, flowerlike ways, for caresses; that she ought at this very instant to be saying and hearing quite other things. Angry, let the young man be angry, but only for the space of a lover's tiff. Then the making up "that all the more endears," quickly, quickly, why all this waste of time? But that, of course, was only the hasty whisper of nature, the old nurse, and if we invariably listened to her our world would indeed crumble about us.

So the young man, stung, not by her, but subconsciously by the senseless waste of good things in general, looked down very coldly upon the young woman. With outward meekness he set down the frame. Then, suddenly, quite spontaneously and in a tone of real interest, he gave a "Hullo!" that made her turn quickly round.

"What are you looking at, Mr. Laverock?"

"This." Archie held out a photograph in a smaller frame.

"I know this girl," said he, his eyes on the image of a pretty face with a Red Cross band above serenely laughing eyes. "Wasn't she working at Lady Richbourne's hospital for officers, in town?"

"Yes," returned Lucy Joy, taken aback. "She's Ethel Johnson—she was at school, one of the big girls, when I went. You know the mad infatuation one gets, as a child. I thought she was the most wonderful creature who'd ever lived."

"She was a topping girl," pronounced the rover, in tones of unstinted and real admiration. "She's prettier than this," he added, putting down the photograph. "Much prettier."

"Do you think so?" said the beauty girl, amusingly disconcerted. Not a common experience to her, to hear, in her presence, another girl so praised. "D'you like red hair?"

"When it's the sort of red hers was," answered this young man, obviously caught back for the moment to memories. "It seemed to light up the ward like a posy of marigolds or something; awfully cheering to look at when you were laid on your back and getting fed up with day after day in hospital. She was so bright and jolly, too. Everybody liked her. Everybody in the ward used to call her 'Our Ginger'—"

"Oh, yes, they would," said Lucy Joy lightly, absently. She added on a sudden, unexpected impulse, an unexpected question.

"Mr. Laverock! Was it *you*," she asked quickly, "who gave Ethel that great big bottle of *Mystérieuse* for a present when you left the hospital?"

The young man looked at her in swift surprise; looked at her with those rover's eyes of his, deep-set, wide apart, sweetly shaped, of a color which seems

sometimes the clear brown of a trout pool, sometimes gray as rain on rocks, sometimes green as a quick-sliding stream under willows, sometimes a bright and melting mixture of all these colors. Unstable as water, they do still, in their fashion, excel!

Lucy thought impatiently, "What color *are* the creature's eyes?" even while she waited for him to answer her question about the *Mystérieuse*.

A second's delay only, he caught himself up from replying what was on the tip of his tongue, "How *did* you know anything about it?" and said gently, as if puzzled, "I don't think so?"

"Oh, I expect I'm mixing you up with somebody else," the girl replied airily. "There were so many of you, weren't there? I don't suppose Ethel knew one from another herself."

And she turned toward the garden, no doubt feeling that she had the last word.

The rover, suddenly cheered, restored to the unreasoning, unreasonable gayety of his age, followed her out. Never, he thought, had he felt more completely "at the heels" of any girl. He'd get her, too, he vowed, lifting his shining head in the sun; he'd have a dashed, good shot at getting her, by gad. Hadn't he just hit on the way to begin to handle her ladyship? Cross as two sticks because one seemed quite as interested, or more, in other girls, piqued if one didn't seem to be admiring her the whole time. All difficult and englamored as she was by her success, with half the men in London keen to know her, he'd get her to look at him yet.

CHAPTER IV.

Next came that affair of the breakdown.

Oh, not to Archie! So far it had been his luck not to have had one in all his dealings with cars and their little ways that kept him so busy. This story,

which does not concern itself with that side of the rover's life, takes him up again a week from the picnic in the pine wood, on an early afternoon that found him again in Surrey, again, incidentally, driving a two-seater.

This he was taking back to town for some minor alterations to be made in the body according to the wishes of a client who had been "put on to" Lave-rock's firm by the people with whom he'd completed the deal with the little Standard.

A couple of miles away from their house and on a turning to the Portsmouth road, the young man came upon a larger car, beached, beside a village green complete with ponds, geese, chorus of open-mouthed school children, these last all gaping, from a safe distance, at the owner of the car. He was a stout and four-square gentleman in a light, holland, driving coat, which flapped about him as he pitted his strength manfully enough against every known law of motor machinery.

"Somebody in trouble again," thought Archie as he drove up.

The man by the wayside turned, cap pushed up from his brow, face a study in angry purples.

"Good heavens, it's the admiral," Archie realized. "Er—can I be any use, sir?" he added an instant later.

The admiral's heated countenance relaxed. "Ha," he grunted in recognition and relief. "Good afternoon. How did do. Thanks very much; if you would have a look"—Archie was already having the look—"at this blasted thing. She suddenly refused to go another step, and I've been anchored here for a quarter of an hour. The first time I've been out on the road with her alone. I'm blessed if I— Can you see what's wrong?"

"I think so," said Archie serenely, long, brown fingers at work. "It's nothing much, sir. A loose connection on the magneto. There! I don't

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think you'll have any further trouble with that." He straightened himself.

"Thank you, very much, my boy. Much obliged to you," returned the admiral, more cordially than he had yet addressed this young man, already seen on two occasions at the blue bungalow. "I was fortunate to meet you; very fortunate. And where are you off to?"

Archie explained.

"Ah," took up the admiral in added good temper. He was a quite good-tempered senior officer when things were going reasonably smoothly, with many more good qualities than Mrs. Harrison, for instance, would have credited him with. The head grows gray, in most of us, so much sooner than the heart! The admiral, for all his natural, well, envy, of those whose heads still match the golden youth within, was fair enough to this young man who had helped him. Not a bad boy, at all, he thought. Gentlemanly boy enough. Very hard lines on these young fellows, the admiral realized, who have to make up five years' leeway in these present conditions. What chance, now, had a boy like this? Evidently no money. No people. No possibility of getting married, for instance, for donkey's years.

The admiral's thoughts rather ran on marriage this spring. His own, he considered, had been a particularly happy marriage.

Most sailors' marriages are, for obvious reasons which they overlook.

It was not impossible, not at all impossible, that he might even consider a second venture one of these days. The girls were off his hands now. There was life in the old dog yet. He wasn't so old, damme!

He offered young Laverock a cigar. Then volunteered, "I met you just in time. As a matter of fact I'm just on my way to call on our mutual friends at the bungalow over there."

"Oh, are you, sir?" said Archie pleasantly.

"Yes, the fact is it happens to be my birthday and I thought I might manage to persuade the ladies to help me out with a little celebration at the Berkeley."

"To-night, sir?" said Archie Laverock. Adding these, to him, surprising words, "I'm afraid—I fancy you may find they're engaged."

The words came from his lips as if uttered by another. Why should he have said them? He had no idea what engagement those people might have for to-night. They might be free, or away. He hadn't heard. He had made no plan.

That plan, however, formed itself lightning-swift in young Laverock's mind even as the elder man with a tolerant smile, a twinkle in that midshipman's eye of his, returned:

"Ha, yes, yes; a most sought-after, little lady, our friend, I know. Still, one may be able to induce them. I can only try my luck. Well! I'll push off. Good day to you, Mr. Laverock. Oh, are you starting the car for me? Much obliged to you, I'm sure."

"Not at all, sir; so glad I happened to be there," from Archie promptly. Respectfully lifting his cap, he went on his way.

But not along the highroad to London. No! He had that plan to follow, given a chance. He turned off sharply to the right. This was one of these short cuts of Surrey Lane which the rover knew as well as he knew the path to his own tent, seeing that all the home counties were beginning to be as an open map to him now. And he knew where he might dare to cram on speed.

There was just a chance, the young man at the wheel was thinking rapidly, but composedly, after the campaigner's manner. Just a chance. This cut across country was a couple of miles longer than going back by the main

road to the turning beside the pine wood. But, dash it, he couldn't race the old boy along the open road. The admiral had the start all right; a good start, a start in every way.

Archie would do what he could, though. Up, down, to the right, here. This lane was bad, windings, doublings. But this little Singer was light. The admiral's car was a bigger affair, more cumbersome. Besides! If this were the old boy's first day on the road alone he wouldn't manage her as Archie, driving all day long, all these months, could manage this. He wouldn't make the pace that Archie could make, was making even now.

On, on, to the right again, the village, the post office, and, at last! the turning to the lane by the pine wood, streaming those dark-green and brown scarfs on either hand as Archie dashed past. He had reckoned on coming out at the top of the hill, the back of the house. Here he alighted. Without stopping the car, he dashed down the side path into the little garden.

At the gate in the palings a car—no—a taxicab was drawn up on the turf track. A taxi, and upon it were piled a large suit case and several of the gay-striped hat boxes splashed across with the name of a French milliner in letters not so much larger than the autograph of Lucy Joy.

Good heavens! She was going away, then? Neither of them would be able to engage her for this evening? The race had been in vain?

Even as Archie's face fell, he was assailed by a gay storm of welcome from the lawn. Not her voice. Not Lucy's voice. No, she wasn't there.

Only Mrs. Joy sprang up from where she was sitting, winding petunia-colored silk for that jumper of hers off the hands of her sister.

"Oh, Madgie! Look! It's Mr. Laverock——"

"Hullo! How d'you do——"

"How nice of you to come again so soon! Oh, no! I oughtn't to have said 'so soon,' ought I? We ought to have thought it was countless æons—be quiet, dogs!—since we saw you!"

"But we *are* glad to see you! We are indeed!"

"Pet! My pet, aren't you nearly ready to start?" broke in Mrs. Joy in a sort of scream aside to the house. "Your taxi's been waiting years! And here's Mr.—have you had lunch?" to the young man. "You haven't, of course. They *never* have. Come in, at once, and eat what's left of the——"

"I can't, thank you most awfully much," Archie succeeded in putting in firmly. "I can only stop one second; the car's up there and I've got to fly. I came to ask you and Mrs. Harrison—and Frankie, if he's still with you?"

"Oh, yes! His leave isn't up until to-morrow. He's only in his room dressing or shaving or something. When the vicar calls he's always shaving, such an alibi! The whole house is simply one mass of soapsuds and shoe whitener and cigarette ashes while he's—Frankie!"

"Good," said Archie heartily, but thinking that every second brought the admiral's car nearer. "Then will you, Mrs. Joy and your sister and Frankie, come out to supper to-night——"

"Oh, yes! How lovely. We'll love to. Where?"

Small, rueful laugh from Laverock. "Only at one priceless, little dug-out. Frankie knows about finding it and all that——"

"Hul-lo——" as Frankie lounged into sight, waving a pipe.

"He'll tell you. You all three, then, will come? That's awfully nice. I——" His quick rover's glance had caught a blue flutter inside the hall. "I know it's no use. I don't ask Miss Lucy."

A pretty, petulant treble demanded from the house, "Why don't you ask Miss Lucy?"

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She stood, framed in the garlanded doorway, beyond her young brother's big, flannel-clad shoulder. A picture, a picture that crowds paid to see on the screen, that men raced about the roads to have one word with in the flesh; the beauty girl, the season's rage and vogue and pet.

Archie looked up at her with such composure that none would have guessed the disturbance which that sweet glimpse roused within him. Purpose dominated emotion. He smiled serenely as he greeted her, the girl who had filled any waking dream for which a hard-worked, young motor expert had arranged time since he saw her last.

"Oh! I don't invite *you*," he told her with a careless glance toward the cab and the luggage, "partly because I thought you were going away?"

"Only to rehearsal. They're doing 'The Highwayman's Sweetheart' on Gibbet Hill, and I'm supposed to be there at three, but what is the use of turning up punctually," twittered the star, "when it means waiting for the whole of the Hippodrome chorus to finish eloping from the girls' school in the neighborhood? We finish by six, I trust. And what's the other 'partly' why you leave me out of an invitation that includes the *whole* of the rest of my tribe? May I ask if you're taking the *parrot*? Or will it be enough with mummie and auntie and Frankie, Mr. Laverock?"

Archie Laverock smiled up at her as easily as if he had the whole afternoon with her before him, instead of wondering how far off the admiral was now? Five minutes? Four? Or had Providence arranged another breakdown? Or—heavens!—was that his horn on the road now?

"I shouldn't dare to ask *you*," he told Miss Joy in a "light-ragging" note. "You don't know the kind of thing at all, pot luck and garbage. Just an old sergeant to do for us. Drink out of

enameled cups. Wouldn't amuse you at all. Only, as it's my birthday"—this last, quite on the spur of the moment and due to frenzied consciousness of the admiral's nearing, nearing—"my birthday and so on, and we've a man there who plays the banjo rather decently, and your aunt told me she used to have a banjo, so I thought—but—I've nothing to hold out as an inducement to *you*," he added, while his voice changed suddenly from the casual to the wistful.

That tone supplied all that he left unsaid about, "I'm afraid it doesn't run to the sort of thing Miss Lucy Joy is accustomed to, never will; so why say any more about it? Good-by; I hope you've a good time at the Berkeley."

That tone caused those sentimental Edwardians, mummie and auntie, to exchange glances. Therefore they missed something, the look of their darling at that moment as she stood upon the steps. An odd look, something that meant more than any expression that had yet crossed the much-advertised and perfect little face of Lucy Joy.

It was the look of a very young child, first confronted with something quite new, but beautiful in its sight, a little child seeing for the first time a rainbow, or a lighted Christmas tree who has shown that tremulous breaking up, that hint of shy radiance.

Mostly, the successfully modern girl begins like every other young girl, with dreams of Prince Charming. These she outgrows, that is if she means to be a real success, at about sixteen. After this her dreams of delight take the form of things more tangible, a screen or stage career is often among them, for that leads to everything else. In the case of Miss Lucy Joy, the "everything else," the career, the success, the frocks, the advertisement, and the popularity had all come first. At nineteen she had them all. Now, for

the first time she had a glimpse of the other.

A young lover, good to look upon.

She looked, for that second. Then, petulant and gay again, she cried out:

"I'm coming. Of course, I'm coming. Mummie, he thinks I'm too spoiled to enjoy anything that isn't——"

"Oh, Mr. Laverock! She isn't a *bit* spoiled! Of course, she shall come, too, if she wants to, shan't she?" Mummie rushed to her child's defense. "She'd enjoy it! Wouldn't you, my pet? Now fly, darling, fly! or you'll never get back in time from those awful people."

Lucy, with a wake of blue tulle and *parfum Mystérieuse*, flew. The taxi with her large suit case and her small self had disappeared round the corner of the road just as the admiral's car came into view from the other direction. Young Laverock had at that moment taken the path back to where his two-seater waited, snorting to the pine trees' whispered "Hush—hush——"

So it was that the admiral, arriving, found only the two elder ladies in the garden, Frankie having precipitately fled indoors and covered his pink face with unnecessary shaving soap; found, too, that the prophecy of that young motor man was fulfilled.

They would have loved to come to the admiral's birthday dinner, Mrs Joy effused, but most unfortunately they—"What a life!" screamed the parrot—they were engaged. Lucy, too.

"Ah, well! Another time," said the admiral breezily, turning back toward the waiting car. "I hardly hoped to find you free. I know the little one is always booked far ahead."

"But we'd only five minutes ago made this engagement!" babbled that creature of impulse, mummie, then stopped.

Mrs. Harrison, however, felt that she

might now complete the tale. "We promised that nice boy, Mr. Laverock, whom you met on Sunday, to go over by train and have a sort of picnic meal at his camp!"

"Ah, really." The admiral turned. "Ah, yes. I think I met the young man just now on the road. He's just been here, has he? Indeed!"

Choler lit up that blue eye over which the cap was cocked just a thought askew. The young beggar! thought the admiral. He had, had he? Stolen a march. Raced him. Well. The race isn't always to the swift. Perhaps he, that youngster, wasn't going to have the last word after all.

The admiral took two strides back from the gate. His jaw was set, but his tone was airy enough as he made his next move.

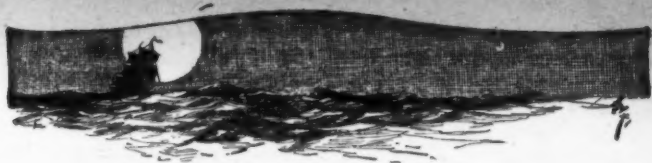
"Mrs. Joy, I wonder if you'd mind my asking to go into the house and write a note to Miss Lucy? I've just remembered there was something I rather wanted to say to her. If I might beg for a bit of paper—ah, thanks——"

He sat down at the bureau in the chintzy drawing-room so full of flower scent and fresh air, where Lucy and the rover had crossed invisible swords that Sunday afternoon. A dozen highly finished portraits of Miss Lucy Joy, and one of a girl in a Red Cross cap, smiled upon the four-square man who took out his pen with such a look of purpose and wrote upon the note paper provided, thick and rough edged and feminine.

He wrote quickly, just two sides of a sheet. He fastened it up, then took it out onto the sunny lawn.

"Thanks so much, Mrs. Joy," he said briskly. "No, no; I can't stay for it, really. Thank you very much. I must get on now. And if you'd be so kind as to let Miss Lucy have this directly she comes in?"

TO BE CONTINUED.



The Shadow on the Sea

By Ferdinand Reyher

Author of "The Man, the Tiger, and the Snake."

DO you believe in mysticism? Thought control, transference and exchange, and all that? Telepathy and psychic waves of one sort of undulation and another? It's a strange garden, that of the human heart and mind. Fertile for Heaven alone knows what exotic flowering.

There is the case of Maurice Armontel and Belle Berley—or Belle Armontel or Belle Lang, as you will. How are you going to explain it, if just inhuman patience, concentration, endurance, and self-control are not explanation enough? What mystical sun nurtured Armontel's purpose? The roots of the explanation may well lie in the depths of human mysticism. Start digging round those roots, and you are liable to many a shiver and prickling coolness up the spine.

At noon the great, iron door of the State prison slid apart and permitted Maurice Armontel to put ten years of confinement behind him and stand free in the early spring sunshine. Stand—that gives a wrong impression. Of immobility. Armontel almost gave one the *sensation* of mobility. Even when physically passive, and this he was, or appeared to be, most of the time one, somehow, had the feeling that his mind worked in sweeping piston strokes. He was of the breed which dwells apart, essentially a watcher through implacably steady black eyes.

Sallow, leaner, the corners of his mouth pulled in tighter than ten years ago, drawing his lips to practically no width whatever, carriage held more consciously erect, the old, lithe, effortless stride, hands not quite so delicate as they had been when he went in, but still graceful as an artist's, with fingers, however, which were nearer to sensitive steel than to flesh—fundamentally he was the same Armontel who had given ten garlanded years of a life extraordinarily capable of being lived to the full, to prison. Ten years! And remember this: he was, above everything else, the type of man loving liberty beyond all things, holding to freedom as oak leaves to the sky.

When a Frenchman is cool he is the coolest person in the world. Armontel was the coolest Frenchman. He was brought to America at ten. He was thirty-five now. He had graduated from a technical college at twenty-two, and in three years won a reputation with his experiments in steel hardening.

Before the great, iron door had shut behind him, closing the case of The People versus Maurice Armontel, he was walking rapidly to the station. When the New York express came in he went into the smoking car. As the train pulled out again he took a deep pull on his cigarette, raised his eyebrows, and slightly parted his lips.

Thus Armontel saluted freedom, gestures as extravagant for him as another man could have matched by throwing wide his arms, sucking in a draft of fresh air, and exclaiming something blasphemously ecstatic.

His journey to New York was a tense, cold summary of the thoughts of ten years. You believe that ten years are long enough for a man to spend in thinking? You did not know Armontel. Nor Belle Berley nor Belle Armontel nor Belle Lang, whichever you prefer to call her. I prefer to think of her under her own name. She had too definite a personality to have it submerged, even in print, under any man's. You must remember how he loved freedom, how unswerving a man of his temperament can be, how a man like that can hate where he loved. Moreover, thinking thrives on practice quite as much as billiards, golf, or polo. Besides, through with the speculative and analytical side of ten years' planning, he was now entering upon the executive phase.

What Armontel wanted to do was a simple thing, in words. He wanted to put a woman and, incidentally, a man, who were roaming the world free, into a prison. Now, the prison which Armontel had in mind was unlike any prison you or I would conceive. In the first place, there was no handy, legal grip by which he could have them thrown into our sort of prisons. Yet, being a man of imagination, ten years in prison had taught him how prison would affect Belle Berley. And in a prison he meant to have both her and Lang.

Where another man would have tipped the edge of his hate with desire to kill, blindly, brutally, horribly, satisfactorily, and, actually would have killed, Armontel had forced his passion into construction, not destruction. The construction of a prison such as a mystic as Blake or Jacob Boehme

might have conceived and from which they alone, and not Belle Berley, might have escaped. Armontel had no intention, therefore, of doing some slight thing, such as death, to the body of Belle Berley and letting out her blithe spirit untouched, to roam through eternity with all her golden carelessness.

What he had in mind was more leisurely and magnificent altogether.

There had been moments, years ago, in the first black hours of revelation, when the blind fury to kill quickly throttled his native self-possession, but his inherent steadiness had kept him up in his emotional tempests, until he got his hate anchored in a firmer bottomed harbor than the one of quick death. Not the body—it was not Belle Berley's beautiful body he was desirous of hurting; he knew one could not reach her that way. It was her spirit he wanted to reach, to catch her where life was toughest, not weakest, and, yet most sentient, in such manner that she should have time and consciousness to watch an extraordinary thing being done to her. Ten years was not long enough to think out the necessary plan for *this*, not if you knew Belle Berley.

At eighteen or nineteen, when Armontel, himself twenty-one and still in school, married her, she must have been extraordinarily beautiful, with that mass of gold silk for hair, her cold, blue eyes, and the perfection of regular features. Strange that she had not been drawn to the stage, for she was the finest show-girl type. She was a living contradiction of the legendary divorce of beauty and intelligence. Her career began abruptly.

In the writing room of a hotel a certain wealthy broker in the postadolescent stage of fifty-five flirted with her. As a result of two meetings, neither of which lasted more than an hour and were witnessed in such a fashion that they could be properly attested to in a court of law, and two rather vehe-

mently indiscreet notes, Belle Berley came into the possession of a sum of money which, judicially invested at six per cent, would have given her a modest, but not negligible income. Considerably more, at any rate, than the salary of the average minister or college professor.

Armotel, of course, got the idea that she had been persecuted. They were of the type which, though alike cool, steely, fortified in reticence, with strong passions banked like deep fires, nevertheless still seem to require each other and do not mutually antagonize—not for a year, at any rate. What eventually brought Armotel from his experiments upon steel in the abstract to the concrete testing of it in the form of the ball safe in the offices of the Dewitt, McClurg & Hammond Valve Company must have been a path as interesting in a study of human nature as it was intricate. It had become fiendishly irksome for her, shut up in an apartment with a man lost in the mazes of a great idea of tempering steel to a point of hardness never before attained, to say nothing of not seeing him for days on end when he buried himself in the laboratory or was in the great Dryack & Stotesbury foundry, messing with white-hot metal in his cool, implacable way. She was the stream-line, silver-fittings type, and life moved toward that fortune she lusted for entirely too slowly.

He completed the process by which he evolved the famous white-crystal steel, and the process was appropriated by the Dewitt, McClurg & Hammond concern without anything approaching adequate compensation to him. His legal position in the matter was so weak that he had lost his case before he ever brought it into court. There went part of the awaited fortune glimmering. And now Jim Lang appeared. At that time Lang had a bothersome quarter of a million a year with

the ambition to spend it upon Belle. He was a rangy, chestnut-haired creature of the utter five senses, with a discus-thrower profile. He had a chuckling outlook on life and the trick of escaping from its disagreeable aspects by refusing to recognize them. Armotel had perhaps become contaminated with his wife's moral obliqueness to the point where he believed that the money he took from the Dewitt, McClurg & Hammond safe was rightfully his, but there is no doubt that the patent effect of Lang's quarter of a million a year on his wife was his principal stimulus.

He was arrested by Galligan on suspicion. There was not a particle of evidence against him which was not of the flimsiest circumstantial sort. The money was stowed in a place in the Dryack foundry where not a soul would ever come upon it, and only Belle besides himself knew. He had no fear that Galligan could make his arrest good. Then, like a bolt, Galligan produced the money, and men, too, who had seen him hide it. Belle broke down. It was impossible for the court to decide whether her tears were for his fate or just self-pity at the thing her pristine innocence had got her into when she married him. Strange how dull the perceptions of a keen mind can become at times. Particularly in the presence of beauty in tears. Even then Armotel suspected nothing.

Eight months after he entered prison she went to England with Lang, and there they were married, after her divorce was granted without a protest. Galligan himself came to tell him of the marriage, but it was the additional hints he wormed out of Galligan with a masterly casualness which at last opened Armotel's eyes. It was after Galligan left him alone that those moments had come when he just wanted to kill, to kill quickly.

He had throttled that brain storm.

Came a pause of weeks, a mentally non-existent pause. Then he had begun his thinking in earnest. * Every moment, mental and physical, in his life in which Belle figured he had rehearsed. He repeated everything she had ever said to her, everything she had ever said to him, reviewed every act of hers, no matter how trivial, re-creating her life to the most fine detail, which meant her ambitions and inhibitions, her thoughts and her strengths and weaknesses, her desires, and her talents. One remembered word of hers suggested another, and that a third, and so on, until he had recalled all her words; one act of hers prompted the recollection of her other acts. He caught in his memory the very inflections she had used in speech at each and every specific time, the exact gestures accompanying them. He separated the real woman, which was Belle Berley and Belle Armontel and Belle Lang, from the actress Belle. He dissected her affection, analyzed her inherent sophistication, and measured the absolute percentage of retrogradation or development resulting to her character from everything she had ever contemplated, said, and done to his knowledge. No one in the world can ever understand a woman like the man she has fooled to the bitter limit.

In the end, the end of ten bitter prison years, when every thought of big work in the world where so much work must be done had vanished and left him only fixed with an ice-cold hate, he had one thing, nevertheless. He had *her*. He had her as she did not have herself. He knew her, inside and out, as perhaps no person has ever known another; he knew her to the point of prophecy.

But this was only preparation. He was only darkly working round to his plan.

Through newspapers and that underground wireless of prison and its gossip chain leading to the outer world he

had received news gleanings of her and Lang from time to time. Quite unexpectedly, in the last three years of prison, he found that he had got to the point of some mystic telepathic contact with her out there in the spacious world. He got the feeling that he could put his finger on her, no matter where she might be. And this did a curious thing to his conception of the spacious outer world. It began to contract it, as he drew into closer and clearer touch with Belle, contract that spacious world out there beyond his prison walls until it became no larger to him than his prison. He knew then that though she were to bury herself and Lang in some fantastically remote grotto between Flores and Torres, he could go straight to her, if he desired, as soon as ever the great, iron door slid apart. Inevitably, in that way, he got the impression of the world as a little place, as a place of confinement, as a prison itself, from which there was but one escape, one way out—a great, iron door sliding open and the released convict standing free in the spring sunshine of death.

But, and herein grows apparent the germ of Armontel's idea of revenge, the prisoners of the world do not know that they are prisoners; the vast majority of them do not, at least. That is what keeps the earth tolerable. That is why it was tolerable to Belle Berley. Once let her realize that she was in prison! That there was no escape this side of death! That she was not free! She required above all things the consciousness of freedom with every breath of air she took into her lungs. Let her realize that she was actually confined, and that no matter where she went he could be there, and the world was too tiny for her to escape him!

She, too, was one who held to freedom as an elm holds its leaves to the free air and to the rain and the spring night winds.

Armotel remembered that she was even like this.

This was at the bottom of all her oblique craving for money. Money, to Belle, was the purchasing power of freedom. It meant racing automobiles, yachts, gambling, jewels, gowns, gayety, light, music, no trammeling of desires ever—life.

One year ago there had come an opportunity to prove the effectiveness of this contact he had established with her.

Do you recall, by any chance, the cable dribbling which came from Norway when the notorious Continental thief, Raoul Nesto, killed a woman who had been unfaithful to him? It was a stick in the news columns that expanded into illustrated full pages in the Sunday magazine sections. Armotel, reading it, said to himself:

"She will be in New York in three weeks just to prove to herself that she and I are no analogy to Nesto and his woman. Galligan or somebody else will be here in about twenty-eight days to sound me on my attitude toward her and what I propose to do when I get out."

Galligan came a day less than a month later. He came by Armotel's cell casually, he implied.

"Why, hello, Armotel! You still here?" with an operatic gusto of amazement. "If I hadn't forgot you were here! How are you, anyway, old man? Why, say, you must be about slated for the open, old man! And will the world look good, eh, Armotel? Say, I guess you'll tell the world it will, eh, boy?" He paused and shot one of his keen, hard glances at the Frenchman. "Ever hear anything of the Mrs.—that was? Say, that was a raw deal to leave you cold like that," he said confidentially, leaning forward. "But you should worry! The one game is ferget 'em, walk by 'em if you ever run into 'em; you was figgerin' on doin'

just that, I guess?" Galligan laughed hollowly against Armotel's noncommittal silence. "What was you thinkin' of takin' up when you get out? Say, d'ye know, I might get you in line for a job in a laboratory, old man, because I'm——"

Armotel interrupted. He had produced a sealed envelope, which he handed to Galligan.

"When you get back, tell her you were out of luck and couldn't get what you came for. Then give her this."

Galligan literally went out walking backward. He delivered the envelope to Belle.

"Enough to give you the creeps, that cold, black eye of his!" he said.

The envelope contained a clipping of the Nesto case. Across the clipping Armotel had written in his minute, engraved script: "*Le Fou!*"

"What's it mean?" asked Galligan, who had not yet completely recovered from the shock given him by the ease with which Armotel read his thoughts.

"It means 'the fool,'" she answered, after first wetting her lips.

She looked at Galligan complacently, however, evincing nothing of the gash fear had made within her. Armotel had no money. Money—that was everything! She could put half the world between them with money. She and Lang returned to Europe.

A heavy mist came seeping landward from the sea, trailing gray streamers behind it, which lifted from the water high enough at times to afford a fairly extended glimpse of waves piling upward with sinister sweeps. Sunlight, filtering through these rifts, played weakly on the churning water. Belle sat in the stern of Baron de Christophe's yacht, *L'Aiglon*, staring at the somberly riotous Channel. Lang was ahead, talking with the Italian diplomat who was also one of the guests on *L'Aiglon*. Belle's beauty—she was

thirty-two—had even more vogue about this time than Lang's money. The misfortune into which her innocence had led her, marrying a criminal, served only to enhance her present charm and state. She settled herself more luxuriously into the comfortable deck chair, still staring back at the wake of the yacht. The roughness of the Channel cheered her. She was a good sailor, loved the sea, and, somehow, lately it gave her a sense of isolation and safety. A smile, which was a half sneer at something hidden and half a sign of anticipation at the prestige of visiting the baron's estate just outside of Bordeaux, hovered over her lips so classically exquisite.

It was a characteristic of Belle that when she felt most secure she also felt slightly contemptuous of the world. At such times one corner of her exquisite lips would be dragged down the faintest trifle. As she contemplated the Nile-green and soapy upheaval of the Channel she was thinking how easy, after all, it had been to gain an invitation from the baron to take this trip on *L'Aiglon*, how stupidly simple it would be to have Pieriffi, the Italian, invite them to Florence, how easy to make free to the wide world when beauty and wealth were yours; how beauty and wealth relish freedom, because beauty and wealth alone can be free; how—

Suddenly her eyes opened wide, her lips straightened, her heart seemed to stop. She gripped the arm of the deck chair convulsively and leaned forward with a sort of unbelieving, yet clairvoyant gleam in her eyes. There was a hoarse interchange of *L'Aiglon's* siren and some monstrous bellowing. The engines of the yacht seemed to be throbbing futilely against air, the yacht began to grind slowly about where it stood. A vast, black wedge of shadow had struck through the mist, which lifted from the sea for

about a hundred yards now and rested, heavy and ominous, on mist and spray and wave. It moved with stalking leisure across the fading tracery of the yacht's wake in a pale shell of sunlight.

The next moment a mountainous hulk loomed toppling over her. She sprang to her feet. A giant wave and a sheath of mist came between and together seemed to wash *L'Aiglon* away. She lost her balance and slipped, staggered, and clutched the railing, bringing up heavily against it. She was desperately shaken up. Then, as she looked at the vast thing looming overhead, it was transformed merely into the hull of a liner.

Lafayette, she read, even while she continued to stare, as though hypnotized, at the object which had first caught her attention. It was a man, evidently a deck hand or stoker, leaning easily out of a porthole, his dark, lean face smeary. He was placidly regarding her out of black, implacably steady eyes, regarding her with what she thought was a confident smile of triumph.

It was Armontel.

"That's the *Lafayette*!" Baron de Christophe called back to her. "We pretty nearly sank her," he said facetiously. "She's bound for Bordeaux. Shall we beat her in?"

"Yes! Yes!" cried Belle wildly.

For five days the dry storm of the sirocco had continued in Naples. Hot, choking, overstuffed, the air packed down on the city like a pile of dust-saturated burlap. In the afternoon Belle and Lang drove out along the embankment from the Castel dell' Ovo to the great port. The air was stifling beyond a breath of freshness from across the bay, where Sorrento and Capri hid behind the oppressive thickness of the heat. There was only the dead, fishy odor of low tide. They told

the coachman to stop, got out, and went to the edge of the embankment.

For a short distance the receding tide had left a kind of miniature lagoon of silvery water on the beach. It caught Belle's eye, and a moment later there passed over it a shadow, so quickly that she had hardly time to shudder and look up. A trio of restless crows settled on the beach beyond the pool and began hopping back to it, picking about in the scummed sand. Their heads dropped and rose with mechanical precision.

"Let's go!" she said, gripping Lang's arm.

Lang was cross.

"What's all this rush about, anyhow?" he demanded. "Have you seen him again?" he sneered.

"I shall, soon enough," she answered.

"Pooh!" he said. "I am getting fed up on this," he said. "We bolted from De Christophe ten minutes after we got into Bordeaux that day. You couldn't see a thing but Paris then. And how long did that last? A couple of days, and then, without an excuse——"

"I didn't want to stay there, that's all!" she interrupted quickly.

"If he's going to do all this to you—that is, if you really did see him—why, let's get him locked up again. We ought to be able to drum up some sort of charge against him and put it over, with all the wires we can pull."

"And open up the whole business again, and get dragged into it and under it if he chooses to talk? He chose to keep quiet ten years ago; but what if he talks *now*?"

"Talk! What if he does? What can he prove? What would it amount to? People would think he was crazy."

She mused over this for several minutes.

"Small chance," she said at last. "He's not the kind you can make people think is crazy. Any lawyer in the

world would be glad, with what he can tell, to defend him if we started anything."

"Maybe," said Lang.

"And there's Morsen. He was about fifty-five when I got to him for a friendly margin," she said grimly. "He's 'round seventy now, and still going strong, Hillyer told me in Paris a couple of months ago. Morsen would be tickled to finance him in the fight," she said grimly.

"Ah, those old, endearing young sins!" murmured Lang. "And truth crushed to the turf, and all that sort of thing," he said.

They arrived at the café. The white-haired waiter who led them to a corner table in one of the little dining rooms got a rare surprise. The beautiful lady sat down, and the elegant gentleman was about to do so. Then the elegant gentleman straightened himself with an oath. He seized beautiful signora's hand and fairly pulled her to her feet.

"Look!" whispered the elegant American gentleman.

At a corner, half concealed by a wilted plant and a sideboard, a man was dozing over a glass of wine. His head was bent far down over his chest. He seemed asleep, but to the two he was as though a bomb had exploded under their feet.

Lang pressed a coin into the waiter's hand, and they hurried out of the room. They scarcely exchanged a word before they reached their hotel.

"Do you think he saw us?" she asked then, clasping a hastily crammed bag.

"Mm—no?" Lang rather counter-queried than stated. For a moment his boyish blend of optimism and cocksureness was inadequate to the situation.

"How the devil do you suppose Ar-montel got there?" he abruptly burst out.

She was looking intently into the

door mirror. When she spoke it was as though the words came rather from the reflection of her than from her.

"Is there any place, any place outside of heaven, where he won't be?" the being in the mirror whispered, almost to itself.

"Perhaps even in heaven, my dear," said Lang, again in command of the lighter tone, shrugging his shoulders. "Provided always, of course, in the first place, that there is such a place, and, in the second, that we are eligible."

Carousels, shooting galleries, bonbon stalls, surges of crowds, pouring like tumbling waters this way and that. A cacophony of drums and brass, steam organs and tambourines, castanets and guitars, meeting from competing sources of amusement; ballyhoo men making even musical Spanish strident and far-reaching.

They approached the glittering front of the fair theater. A flash light threw from it regularly a shaft of illumination across the road, lighted up the crowd and some stands there, and then withdrew.

Belle, her hand in Lang's arm, stood aside on the fringe of the crowd. She looked at the Andalusian tinsel and gayety of the fair, coldly disinterested. "Let's go," she said to Lang.

They turned. As they did so, the great finger of light from the theater traveled on its slow, regular excursion across the road, picked out faces with startling distinctness in its path, and lanced itself against the trees for a stark, brilliant respite. They both stopped as though transfixed, both seeing the same thing at once.

On a platform across the road, with two flare lamps turned to dirty blobs of saffron by the white glare of the theater light, two men and a woman were amusing the crowd. One, a dark, lean man with an indescribable grace

of movement, was doing some sort of trick with a high hat, a cane, and two tumblers of water.

She saw it all in a flash, the steely ease of those incomparable fingers, the deftness so rapid no eye could follow. She knew the trick: How he placed the glasses in the hat, covered them with a cloth, and beat hat and tumblers into pulp with a cane, then covered the debris with an empty basket and, whisking the cloth from under it, lifted the basket and revealed the hat intact, the glasses uncracked and filled with red wine.

His eyes were not on the trick, however, as he beat the covered hat and glasses with cool, devilish viciousness. His eyes were directed with implacable steadiness across the intervening heads of the enraptured crowd at her and Lang. Then the swath of light from the theater drew itself back into its own reflector, and the yellow flare lights came back into their own smoky dominion; the platform was dimmed.

Belle and Lang turned and almost blindly hurried through the perversely slow-moving throngs to the station.

He swore softly.

"Why did you want to come here for, anyhow?" he demanded furiously.

They hurried on. Behind them the swack! swack! grick! grick! of the flaying cane and the shattered glass still pursued them, as though Armontel, back there on the platform, in sight of all men's eyes, were raining blows on their uncovered heads and naked bodies.

They were on board ship bound for Japan. She couldn't explain it herself. Something compelled her to move; she was powerless to resist. They had been drifting westward since the night of the fair in Spain, and since that night they had not seen Armontel.

The Azores, New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, San Francisco,

Honolulu, and now Tokyo. It was beginning to vex Lang, this motion without rhyme or reason.

He was one of those persons lenient to all of their desires, who can go to appalling limits of recklessness to gratify anything upon which a ban has been put. It lay behind his courtship of Belle when she was Armontel's wife. Those persons have a blessed heritage of indifference to reality. The great extremes, like great love, great hate, great fear, roll off them like mercury off a porcelain ball.

She felt that she was putting her hold on him to a dangerous strain, with her aimless globe trotting; but she was unable to prevent it. They went to a town fifty miles outside Tokyo. It was as simply beautiful as an old print. The hotel had a balcony on cedar pillars, overlooking a neat, brown town nestling in a crook of an exquisite bit of bay, where mellow, old, yellow junks dipped in a lazy roll of blue water. Precipitous emerald cliffs, tucked round the base with a bow of white road, came, like a wall, close to the town on each side. On the second day they drove out along the white ribbon of cliff road. The peace of it was unutterable. They got out and climbed up a short path to a flat shelf, where they sat and looked down on the bay.

Suddenly Belle drew back, her fingers fastening on his arm with a clutch as painful as a bite. He turned to her, startled. Her face had the lifelessness of chalk.

"What is it?" he exclaimed.

"There—look!"

Skimming over the sea, turning the festive lace caps of the sleepy noon waves into a delicate mauve where it touched them, a rounded shadow came and was gone. On their aloof, cool, and silent perch, they leaned closer to each other. Superficial as Lang was, the thing clutched with mystic significance at him, too.

"It's a cloud shadow, that's all," he whispered when he could trust his voice.

She looked up at him. The color was only now slowly ebbing back into his face. Her fingers loosened on his arm.

"No matter," she said, unconsciously matching his whispered tone. She gave a short laugh. "Cloud shadows!" she laughed again.

They went back to Tokyo and thence to Hongkong. On the wharf in Hongkong her attention happened to be drawn to a bulky sailor with a short, stiff neck, waving at some one who was being sculled toward them in a sampan which was still a hundred yards off shore. That night Lang met a friend—there were few places in the world where the Langs would fail to meet up with an acquaintance or two—and they joined a party on one of the flowery houseboats. Belle came on deck alone, just before they were to return to their hotel.

Sitting on the bank, a stone's throw from the boat, plainly visible in the clear moonlight and in the reflection of the paper lanterns of a boat tied there, she saw Armontel, with the bulky sailor of the wharf, regarding her with his old, inscrutable placidity of triumph.

It was then that Belle understood with a heavy, cold oppression of understanding. It was not Armontel who followed them; it was she who came back constantly, came back whether she would or no, and sought out *him*. The mystic fear currents from the mind of the hider formed an unbreakable and continuous contact with the mind of the seeker.

It was then that the world abruptly became a very small place to Belle, and a prison.

The steamship *Teresa* left Batavia at seven o'clock in the morning. Belle, coming out on deck near ten o'clock, saw several men lying about the quarter-deck. An impulse made her go to-

ward them. They seemed to be lascars. Suddenly, from the deck, out of the boards, apparently, a man rose before her. She was hardly surprised to see Armontel there. For a moment they confronted each other. Facing him, she felt her fear of him vanish.

"America, Europe, Asia, Africa—what's your game, Maurice?" she asked, trying to inject disdain into her voice, succeeding only with an unwanted tenseness, despite herself.

His implacably steady gaze smote her. She could feel her spirit reel under it. If he would only talk.

"What do you want?" She began to search her pockets, and brought forth a little leather purse. She opened it and took out a soiled and creased clipping. It was the clipping he had sent her by Galligan.

"That—what did you mean by that—'le fou,' written across it, do you see, that way? What does it mean?" she asked.

His black eyes regarded her steadily. She had the impression that the fires of an exactly calculated triumph glowed in them. He abruptly turned from her and walked away. Had he struck her she would have felt at ease. She would have known how to deal with a blow. Nothing else could have touched her like his silence, like the contemptuousness with which he turned from her.

It was on the third day that the miserable Dutch-Indian trader got caught in the zigzag currents off Papua, and the engines of the old tub stopped dead. A sturdy squall came up with evening, and Ploeghe, the fat Dutch captain, began to mop his low forehead.

Armontel came on deck. Twice she passed him; each time his eye seemed to pass clean through her. The faint smile she imagined on his lips seemed to say:

"Here beginneth the end!"

The worn tramp reeled along worse than a drunkard on a spinning airship,

and at ten-thirty in the evening scraped the first slice off its bottom on a reef. It got over with a grinding lurch and wallowed toward worse. Two Chinese coolies cut a boat from its davits and jumped after it, which stampeded the rest. Both Belle and Lang felt Armontel hovering near them; but for the moment a still more elemental problem than he presented, a problem of saw-edged ledges and primitive sea forces, freed their minds of him. They clambered into a lifeboat. He was about to get in after them when the boat dropped. He looked over the railing, which rose away from them as the *Teresa* swung over to her other side. The boat had righted itself and was washing away from the ship. He took a quick look round. Two Malays were tugging a raft toward the edge. He ran to them, and with inhuman strength pulled it and them together to the side. They shoved it over and dived after it. One of the Malays hit something in the water, and Armontel did not see him again. He hauled the other up after him on the raft.

In the blackness they soon lost all sight of the other boats and the *Teresa*. They washed round on the sea aimlessly until dawn. The sun's rim, edging up over a leveler plain of water, saw them still clinging desperately to their chip of a raft. To the north Armontel saw a black spot flinging about on a surf which spat whitely against a strip of beach circling a rocky piece of island. For a long time it seemed to swing in one spot at the lips of the surf, making no headway. The raft drifted nearer. He had no need of seeing her gold hair, when the sun caught it full, to know that it was she. Always there had been in him the supreme confidence that she would never evade him until he was ready to let her go, if ever he should be. What puzzled him, however, was that they were alone, if the man was Lang. The

man suddenly stood halfway up. But what had become of the others in that boat? There had been seven or eight of them originally. Washed out?

The raft drifted on, but with a start Armontel noticed that the distance between them was increasing instead of lessening. At the same time the other boat broke through the surf and with a single, clean, high drive came through to the beach. He saw the man stumble out of it, sway round toward the woman; they staggered into each other's arms and tumbled like stuffed figures on to the beach. A fierce jab of jealousy pierced him at their intimacy even in disaster. He felt desperately lonely just at that moment.

The raft swung east of the island. His jaw set so tightly that he felt it in the back of his neck. Then, round the farthestmost projecting rock of the island, he saw another tiny isle to the northwest, about three-quarters of a mile beyond. He rose to his knees, reckless with determination. The current bearing the raft cleared the first island in a graceful bend and drifted in between it and the other. He made the Malay hang his legs over the side away from the island they were approaching and kick in the water. Together their puny, futile effort directed the raft just enough to deflect them the necessary hair's breadth to win the most western tip of land.

Between two forgotten islands in a forgotten ocean at the end of the bottom of the earth, the currents sweep from east to west with a smooth, clean leap on fair days. The water here is deep, crystalline, and of a miraculous turquoise, containing in itself all the shades of greens and blue perfect turquoise may know. In the early morning the sun filters through a lemon haze rising from the surface, and you get a peculiar, tawny glint in the water. At noonday, however, no haze rises, and

the water is pure in tone. At sunset a slightly deeper yellow mist boils up from the sea channel, and again lends that curious saffron glint to the waves.

From the fourth day after the wreck of the *Teresa*, and continuing for seven months, precisely at sunset on each fair day, a fantastic brown shadow flung across the passage between the two islands. It struck out from the north island, reached almost to the southern one at its eastern tip, and traveled like the minute hand of a gigantic clock in a great arc across the water, resting for a moment on the extreme western tip of the southern island before disappearing with a bound out to sea.

A man and a woman came to watch for it every day from a rock on the lower island. For weeks the explanation of it mystified them. Then, one evening, when the sun was hidden partly behind clouds, the man pointed to a small, black figure slowly traversing an opening in the highest part of the upper island. The sun, striking this figure from behind, sent out that shadow across the sea.

The man and woman, haggard from exposure and hunger whetted, not appeased, by eggs found on the rock and some bitter plants, shivered and stood closer together.

It was Armontel.

The broken ledge across which he walked each evening rose precipitously from the narrowest fringe of the island's beach. It was a treacherous piece of going, but evening after evening in his inexorable way he took his walk.

One evening, at the end of the seventh month, the shadow halted midway in the channel between the extremities of the lower island—suddenly halted, and sped back faster than eye could follow to the cover of the heavy black shadow of the upper island itself, which lay on the water eternally solid at this time of day.

The man and woman watching the moving shadow on the water drew back instinctively, and their hands sought each other. Armontel had finally stepped on the weakest part of his ledge and crashed down. He lay helpless until late at night, when the Malay found him. He had broken several ribs. In the morning a pain in his chest and abdomen caught him gasping. He spat blood. His set features, his black, triumphant eyes, gave no inkling of the horrible, wracking agony he was suffering. He only knew that the end was near.

He was a man who studied whatever was about him with the closest attentiveness, no matter how preoccupied with other things. He had studied the currents of the channel from day to day. Also, as though against some sort of contingency such as now presented itself, he had made, with the Malay's help, a pair of rough, strong sweep oars. Dragging himself to the beach on the third night after his fall, he ordered the Malay to put him on the raft and push out. Together, with what inhuman effort on his part none can estimate, they shoved out on the current, which he figured would swing them toward the other island.

In a sort of semi-inclosure in the rocks, out of sight of the beach and the island, of the walker and the shadow, the man and woman had contrived some semblance of habitation, and achieved, after countless attempts, a fire. The Malay sought them out unseen, creeping from rock to rock with the noiseless agility of a cat, and came back and told Armontel.

The struggle to win the other island had done for him properly. His breath was coming and going in rending gasps. There was no doubt of that in his mind. All his strength and hate were holding him to but one single object now.

The man and woman about the fire

sprang to their feet at a ferocious grunt and the sound of slipping footsteps. Into the circle of light staggered a man with stabbing black eyes, supported by another. The light was between them, and the two apparitions assumed blurred, fantastic proportions. But through it all the steady, mad, black gaze of the man who was held up by his fellow stabbed and stabbed at the woman.

"You—you——" he began, and then the terrible grin on his face faded into a grimace of appalling bewilderment. He flung his arms apart as though to obliterate the horrified man and woman before him. "No!" he gasped. "Not even now can you lose me, and when you come out through the great, iron door that shall slide apart just enough to let you out, and you stand outside in the sunlight of death, even out there I'll be waiting for you, and I'll make all eternity prison—prison for you!"

He pitched forward out of his fellow's arms and fell face down on the ground and lay there, still.

The man on the other side of the fire tore himself out of the woman's arms, thrown tightly about him. He rushed to the fallen figure, bent over it, and turned it.

"My God, Frieda, it's a white man!" he cried in Swedish.

"A white man!" she shrieked in Swedish.

A strange garden that of the human heart and mind. Explain it, some one. Dig about the roots of human mysticism and uncover for yourself your own shivers and prickling coolness up the spine.

It was about nine o'clock at night when Armontel fell dead. Making allowance for the difference in time, at the same moment—the same moment precisely, bear in mind—something took place in Durban. In season the magnificent beach of Durban is the gather-

ing place of the élite. Terraced hotels rise from it on the other side of the drive; there are tea shops, bands playing, an esplanade, and a gorgeous drive-way.

For a month the beautiful American woman and her husband—you know, the two who had escaped from that ghastly disaster of the Dutch-Indian trader somewhere off—oh, somewhere off of nowhere—had been in the eyes and on the tongues of all the exclusive and nonexclusive gathering along the beautiful Indian beach. It was noticed that the American lady—did she not have amazing hair and features?—wore a sort of hunted look lately; she seemed highly nervous. But then, after that thing down there off nowhere, who wouldn't be nervous? The American lady took to a high-powered motor car, done in light blue, driving it with rakish recklessness.

Five minutes before Armontel fell dead on that island down there off nowhere—just five minutes, always making allowance for the difference in time, of course—the light-blue, low racer, containing the beautiful American lady and her husband, roared down the great beach driveway of Durban. It was going in the direction of the harbor. Near one of the first great piers there is a little rise, where from the drive one can look out over a smooth stretch of water. It was moonlight, and the water gleamed like polished silver. A policeman was standing across the road looking straight up into the air. A great seaplane was swinging in front of the

moon. He could hear its giant throbbing. Then suddenly its throbbing was drowned in another giant hum. He looked behind him. A low, powerful automobile was boring up the drive. He happened to glance across the road at the silver water.

A huge shadow was sailing across the mirroring sea, as the seaplane crossed between it and the moon. The next instant he heard a scream, and then a terrible impact and an explosion. A great, obscuring screen of dirt and stone rose across the driveway. He saw something dark smash through the coping that guarded a fifty-foot drop into shallow water and rocks, smash through with a sickening, splintering shock, rise, and twirling round, dive over.

"After going through that terrible experience on that shipwrecked trader down there off nowhere, she should never have been allowed to drive a car like that!" said all the ladies of Durban. "Of course, her nerves must have been a wreck themselves."

But what is puzzling me is this, and unfortunately I have utterly no gift for explaining such things:

When Belle Berley and Lang came through the great, iron door of their prison, which slid apart the moment when Armontel fell dead on that island—always making allowance for the difference in time, of course—and they stood in the April sunshine of death, was—this, I think, is the important thing—was Armontel there waiting for them?





More Super-Women

By Anice Terhune

Lady Caroline Lamb:

"The Mad Enchantress"

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
Except with this for an overword—
But where are the snows of yesteryear?
—*Ballad of Dead Ladies.*

I FEAR nobody but the devil!" declared Lady Caroline Lamb. "All along, he has been very particular in his attentions to me, and he has sent me as many baits as he did Job!"

Caroline seemed, at times, his satanic majesty's own dear daughter. Her wild, fiendish temper bore out the relationship. She was quarrelsome, warm-hearted, crazily impulsive, wonderfully lovable, and attractive. Her rages kept those about her in a seething maelstrom. The very qualities which thrust her ever upward, till she danced recklessly upon the top pinnacle of popularity, finally dragged her down to the depths and kept her there.

Caroline began life in 1785 with gorgeous prospects. She was the only daughter of the Earl of Bessborough.

"From her direct ancestress, Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough," says Littell, "she inherited the gift of ready wit, strong if whimsical will, Whig possessions, and undoubted fire of temper; but her own charm more than anything else made her admired by every circle and adored by her own—for a time."

As a child she always had her way. Her mother's ill health left the girl almost entirely to the care of devoted,

foolish servants. Up to the time she was nine years old she ruled the nursery with carefree ease. Then she was sent to Devonshire House, to be educated with her cousins.

At once the small super-woman exerted her charm over her uncle, the duke. He made such a pet of her that she was admitted to his apartments whenever she wished; even when his own children were excluded. The infatuated uncle taught her politics and poetry while they had muffins and tea together. It was a queer, disorganized household in many respects, and not the best place for a girl who needed strict discipline. The children were served on silver, but if they wished a second helping, they had to trot out to the kitchen with their empty plates, like Oliver Twist.

Caroline ran wild. She hated lessons. Her greatest pleasure was to break horses that had as bad tempers as her own. So she spent her time taming colts, and let the lessons go. She was so wayward that her grandmother feared she was actually crazy. The old lady sent for a specialist in mental diseases to examine the child. Caroline charmed him into saying just what she wished him to say:

"Not mad," was the verdict, "but might be made so. An overactive brain! Beware of study!"

So, for some years, Caroline was not

allowed to study at all. Nor did any one dare contradict her about anything whatsoever. For the eminent specialist had warned them, at Caroline's prompting, that any outbursts of passion on her part might seriously affect her health. So she continued to amuse her uncle by drinking "health to Fox and confusion to the Tories" in bumpers of milk—and to ride bareback. She continued to grow beautiful. Her girlhood was starred with love affairs. Yet she turned a deaf ear to all her suitors, for at thirteen she had fallen in love with William Lamb, whom she had never seen!

"I loved him then, because he was a friend of liberty," she writes, "and when I did see him, could I change? No! I was attracted more than ever.

"He was beautiful, far the cleverest person about, the most daring in his opinions and independence. He thought of me as a child only, yet he liked me much."

They first met when Caroline went, with her cousins, on a visit to Lady Melbourne at Brocket, the family countryseat, which afterward became Caroline's virtual prison. William, then just twenty, caught a glimpse of the undisciplined little beauty as she tripped gayly up the broad staircase.

"Of all the Devonshire girls that is the one for me!" he exclaimed.

From that time on, Caroline kept William in hot water. Their mutual fascination soon ripened into deepest passion. It was a strange attraction from the first. On the one side, the calm, cultivated youth of twenty; on the other, the harum-scarum, capricious thirteen-year-old.

William was a younger son, a barrister, with little chance ahead of him to support a wife.

"When first I saw my name on a brief," he said whimsically, years later, "it created a sensation within me not

equaled when I was made prime minister."

Then came his elder brother's death. This made William heir to the Melbourne title and to the lands that went with it. He hastened with all speed to Caroline, and laid them at her feet. Strange to say, she refused him and his offerings! Quite frankly she told him that she loved him too much to risk losing him that way.

"My temper would surely ruin our happiness," she told him, with tears in voice and eyes.

Then, with her usual inconsistency, she added:

"If you like, I'll travel around with you, in boy's clothes, as your secretary. We could be near each other, then, anyway!"

Luckily, William had a grain of sense and would not listen to this temptation. Instead, he waited a while, and then proposed again. The second time, alas, Caroline had not the strength of mind to refuse him!

"I couldn't," she wrote, "because I adored him!"

Meanwhile, Caroline had made an honest attempt to improve herself; she had turned to and studied hard, and had learned prodigiously fast once her mind was set on it. She made herself proficient in French, Italian, music, painting. She became a truly remarkable caricaturist. She wrote as fearlessly as she talked.

She was now nineteen. She was "small, slight, and perfectly formed," wrote her doting lover. Her features were small and regular. Her hair was a lovely gold, her grave eyes dark and mysterious. "Her talk," says Littell, "was odd and sparkling. Her low, unusually sweet voice captivated even her enemies."

She bewitched her whole world and brought it tumbling to her feet. Yet, at this time, she could see only William Lamb. So, with many misgivings, she

let the preparations for the marriage go on.

After a short engagement, the ceremony was performed. Caroline was just twenty. Like Jacob, William had served seven years for his bride. Unlike the patriarch's wedding, though, this one turned out to be a curse instead of a blessing, for both bride and bridegroom. Just as the bishop was about to pronounce the benediction, Caroline was seized with one of her unaccountable fits of temper. What the cause was, no one knows.

"I stormed at the bishop," wrote the bride, later, "tore my priceless dress to pieces, and was carried, nearly insensible, to the carriage which was to bear me forever from my home!"

William found her disposition quite as bad as she had warned him. Yet their honeymoon was ideal. Nothing occurred to upset the very upsettable bride. "William was everything to me," she writes; "it was the happiest time of my life!"

When they came back from the wedding trip and settled down in London, Caroline at once became the rage. Says Hepworth Dixon:

"She was the belle of her season, the toast of her set, the star of her firmament."

Among her faithful admirers was the Prince of Wales, who was a constant visitor at Melbourne House. Her first child was named for him.

All this adulation and flattery was quite enough to have turned Caroline's golden head; but her love for her husband kept her steady—at first. One never quite knew what she might do next. She loved to say startling things. For instance, she was dancing with William Harness at a ball. As they swayed rhythmically to the music, she looked up wickedly into his face and said:

"Guess how many pairs of silk stockings I have on?"

Harness, much abashed, floundered about hopelessly, and admitted that he had "no idea at all." Caroline raised her skirts and pointed to her very pretty ankle and tiny foot.

"Six!" she said.

Before long, Lamb found that his hands were full keeping Caroline within bounds. She became tremendously interested in literary people, and fell under the spell of a cult known as the "Satanic School," composed of long-haired, melancholy, would-be literary lights. They were much given to weird parties which were not at all to Lamb's taste. An incident at one such party is graphically told by Jerdan.

"My eyes were bandaged, and I was told to kneel before Lady Caroline Lamb," he says. "I was then asked what I would do if a ghost assaulted me for wrongs I had done him when alive! Just as I was about to answer, a smart cuff on the head proved to me that this was no ghost story. I pulled off the silken bandage, and found Lady Caroline laughing. The 'ghost' who hit me was William Lamb—who had hurried from the Commons to snatch his wife away from the party."

Among her lovers Lady Caroline counted Tom Moore, Rogers, Spencer, and many another truly great.

"I am in the clouds," she wrote Lady Morgan. Then, while she was in the zenith of her popularity, Lord Byron blazed back into London life. Just returned from Italy, he was the chief topic of conversation everywhere that Lady Caroline went. Some one loaned her the manuscript of "Childe Harold." She went wild over it, and declared she must know the poet.

"He has a club foot and bites his nails," said the jealous Rogers, in a vain attempt to keep the two from meeting.

"If he is as ugly as Æsop, I must know him!" was Caroline's retort.

Yet, when the chance came, she

turned away from it with strange, prophetic impulse. Lady Westmoreland offered to introduce them, at a reception. Though he "was beautiful as the deadly nightshade," she looked at him with aversion and refused absolutely to meet him.

That night she wrote of him in her diary:

"He is mad, bad, and dangerous to know."

But she was not to elude fate so easily. Byron, having seen her, was completely fascinated. Also, he was piqued that she had refused to allow him an introduction. Women were falling all over themselves in their haste to throw their hearts at his lame feet—all but Lady Caroline Lamb. So he resolved that he would meet her in spite of herself.

The day after the reception, he called on Caroline. The capricious lady kept him waiting a long time. Finally, she appeared, charming as ever, but with her mind firmly made up to dislike Byron. Her first glance at him threw her off her guard, for Byron was holding her sleeping child in his arms with almost womanly tenderness. Greatly touched, Caroline allowed him to stay for over an hour. He pushed his advantage by sitting perfectly still and holding the baby on his lap all the while, lest he should wake him by moving.

From that day Byron haunted Melbourne House. It was a wild infatuation on both sides. Byron, as a poet, was a rare genius, but as a man he was utterly selfish, fickle, devoid of conscience, and affected. He had a temper as bad as Caroline's own. They quarreled all the time. During one such quarrel Lady Caroline grabbed a pair of shears and stabbed herself—slightly.

Byron, frightened and horrified, fairly wallowed in an agony of repentant grief. This sort of thing was of almost daily occurrence. Yet, later, he

declared she was the best friend he ever had. He wrote the same thing about his dog.

Rank always held an irresistible lure for Byron, and on both sides there was gratified vanity. Lady Caroline did not trouble to conceal her devotion. Up to this time there had never been a breath of scandal against her, though she had indulged in the wildest follies; but in her affair with Byron she threw caution to the winds. She offered him all her jewels, if he were in need of money. She used his carriage in preference to her own. If he chanced to go where she was not invited, she waited in the street for him.

Hoping to break things up, the scandalized Lamb took his wife to Paris for a time. All went so well that the husband's fears were quieted.

The Lambs decided to return to England. On the eve of their departure they gave a farewell dinner. During the meal one of the guests inadvertently mentioned the fact that Lord Byron was on his way to Paris.

Caroline created a sensation by declaring that if Byron was coming she would not stir one foot out of Paris. Her husband took it quietly, like the gentleman he was; but upstairs there was a battle royal.

When Caroline thought her husband had raged enough, she perched herself on his knee and tried to wheedle him into saying she should remain in Paris. He let her slide to the floor. Furious, she rushed around the room, smashing vases, glasses, cups, and saucers—everything she could lay her hands on that was breakable. Vainly Lamb tried to stop her, and at length, when he was utterly worn out, she got her way. If he had taken a firmer hand at such times, he might have prevented much unhappiness for them both.

She liked to lay the blame on him for her peccadillos.

"He cared nothing for my morals,"

she says. "I might flirt and go about with what men I pleased. He was privy to my affair with Byron and laughed at it. His indolence renders him insensible to everything. When I ride, play, and amuse him, he loves me. In sickness and suffering he detests me."

But to return to Byron.

The fiery flame of their love soon burned itself out. Byron, as usual, emerged unscathed. Lady Caroline was less lucky. She had a germ of real insanity about her, and she was never quite the same again. The story of their final quarrel is told by Francis Jackson.

"At Lady Heathcote's ball last week," he writes, "Lady Caroline and Byron quarreled so fiercely that the former stabbed herself with a knife at supper so her blood flew about her neighbors. She was taken to the dressing room. Supposing her faint, some one rushed to get her a glass of water, and returned just in time to see her disappearing out of the window. Seized by the skirt, she was pulled back into the room. Then the glass of water was offered to her. Instead of drinking it, she bit a piece out of the glass and tried to swallow it.

Immediately after this she became convinced that Byron was untrue to her. Disguising herself as a workman, she gained entrance to Byron's lodgings. She completely fooled his valet, who turned pale with horror when he found out who she was.

After this Byron broke up the intrigue. Lady Caroline could not believe the romance was over until she received the following letter:

LADY CAROLINE LAMB: Since you oblige me to confess it by this truly unfeminine persecution, I am attached to another. I shall ever continue your friend, if your ladyship will permit me so to style myself. And as proof of my regard I offer you this advice: Correct your vanity, which is ridiculous. Exert your absurd caprices on others, and leave me in peace.

BYRON.

Caroline avenged herself by writing a novel called "Glenaryon," with Byron and herself as hero and heroine. In this scurrilous book she showed up all Byron's most glaring faults and follies with merciless vividness.

Yet, in 1824, when she and her husband were crossing a street and came suddenly upon Byron's funeral procession, she fainted. After this shock she had brain fever and was dangerously ill for a long time.

"I arose another person," she says. But the "other person" was uncommonly like the first. She continued to charm and to horrify London as before.

In spite of the Byron intrigue and all her lesser affairs, she loved her husband better than any one else from the beginning to the end of her life.

But by this time her temper had become a byword. Things came to a climax between the husband and wife. She was impossible to live with. Family pressure was brought to bear upon William to make him agree to a separation.

After a particularly violent quarrel, he jumped up from the dinner table and drove off to Brocket. Soon after reaching his room there, he heard a noise in the corridor, and opened his door to find Caroline lying across the threshold convulsed with grief. She had flung herself on a horse and ridden through the night after him. There was a temporary peacemaking. But the next morning they were ready to quarrel again. A wilder dispute followed. Caroline drank laudanum and brandy, but did not succeed in killing herself.

Thereupon the family sentenced her to live at Brocket. Her meals were served in her own rooms, and all her letters were opened. William at last agreed to a separation.

"When the lawyers came with the separation papers," so runs the account,

"they found Caroline sitting on her husband's knee, feeding him morsels of bread and butter."

In 1825 they were formally separated.

Thereafter, Caroline lived in semi-seclusion. She amused herself as best she could, and often played ball with her pages. One time during such a game, a page threw a detonating ball toward the fire. She caught it and deftly threw it straight at his head. It drew blood, and the page set up a howl.

"Oh, my lady! You've killed me!" he bellowed.

Not waiting to see whether she had or not, she rushed to the door, crying: "Oh, God! I've murdered the page!"

The cry was taken up by the whole town. After this a stricter watch than ever was kept over Caroline. She grew queerer and queerer.

Often visitors found her in bed in a darkened room, with a huge fire burning, even in dog days. A page generally sat near by, soothing her with melancholy music. At other times, in fur cap, riding habit, and trousers, she loved to fly through the park on her black mare. She was a kaleidoscope of contradictions.

In her apartments were heaps of valuable things, half buried in rubbish.

Her chintz bedroom curtains were full of holes. An antique cabinet contained a costly crucifix. As an altar cloth she had a bit of Marie Stuart's petticoat. Books, medicine bottles, and plum cake filled a table, and pictures of William Lamb and Byron were everywhere, mixed in with a prayer book, a bottle of cognac, some lavender water, and a piece of pickled salmon.

Finally, she was put in the care of two keepers, and a doctor. That she was able to rage till the last is shown by the fact that she smashed the doctor's watch over his head during a little difference of opinion as to her pulse beats.

When her final illness came her husband insisted that she be taken back to Melbourne House and tenderly nursed. This was done. William was away in Dublin at the time, and her one desire was to live till his return. That she held her fascination over him all her life and even after death is proved by the fact that he could not speak of her without tears.

She died early in 1828, just as her husband came into his title of viscount and was launched fairly upon his dazzling political career—a career which she no longer had the power to wreck.



THE CITY DWELLERS

UPON the hillside, underneath the grass,
 Warmed by the sun, chilled by the snow and rain,
 They sleep, while great cloud shadows o'er them pass—
 The quiet dead, who shall not wake again.

But when my time comes only let me lie
 Close to the narrow, noisy, well-known street,
 Where I may always hear the sound of feet
 And feel the presence of the passer-by.

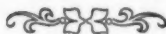
Grant rest to those who, weary, long for rest,
 Far from the busy streets; but let me keep
 Close to the dear lost world I loved the best,
 The world that wakes though we who love it sleep.

AMELIA LEAVITT HILL.



The Lost Portage

By Charles Collins



IT is the land of countless lakes. When the cosmic scene painter had finished with his masterpiece of the stars, he must have wanted to give each one of them a separate mirror, so he reached down and dappled this great forest with water, scattering fantastic decorations of blue and silver through the evergreens. They ripple there, these many meres, at the beginning of the north country, under a magical sky often brushed at night by the fringe of the aurora borealis; and the deep woodland, once ravaged by the lumberman's ax, but now, by second growths of timber, a darker jungle than before, keeps for each of them its special mystery. Some of these lakes are necklaced together into long water trails; others rest alone, a secret unto themselves. The airman who first follows the blue heron and the eagle in flight above them will find in their intricate patterns a new ecstasy.

To this land, in search of the true wilderness, comes a trickle of men in summer for the fishing and in early winter for the hunting. Industrialism, a modern wilderness, is only fifteen hours of travel away, but here, in addition to their sport, these men may catch the mood of primitive nature and feel something of the spirit of the country as it was before the explorers, the fur traders, and the colonists found it. Here, with only a little imagination, you may discover the heart of America as it was in the beginning.

On fair days, under the sun of June, these lakes can be like a joyous cry of laughter, echoed endlessly, but there is always the somber, encircling forest to contain a threat. On days of mist and long, slow rain it is a land of melancholy and primeval loneliness. Then it will seem, when your canoe is three portages away from camp, that you are the first man who ever put a paddle into this water, and that the sad, ironic bird call which wavers across the lake like demented mirth is not the cry of a loon, but the shriek of a pterodactyl or some other obscene, extinct creature of the black past, half waterfowl and half lizard.

It is the land of numberless lakes, but, if you would see many of them, you must go groaning through bogs and over ridges with a canoe crushing your shoulders, painfully following the furtive paths which creep into the forest labyrinths. These are the portages, obscure, meandering traces of the way woodsmen, trappers, and Indians have walked in answer to the instinct to find the mystery always beyond the sky line. They are not trails, but only hints of trails, as elusive as the spirit which calls you to find the next lake and the one beyond that and to go still farther on, hoping, striving, discovering. In all the traffic routes of the world there is nothing more human than the portage. It is the simplest, the humblest, the most useless now, but it speaks of the craving in the heart of man to seek

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and to find—what? The thing that is always just out of reach.

One of these portages had been lost. A fire had burned over it with swift, leaping passion, creating a black cemetery of charred pine boles. A wind-storm had swept down upon it, then, in gusty anger, felling the dead trees, tearing away the blasted branches, making of them a confusion which seemed as if an insane giant had been playing there at jackstraws. It was only one path among many, leading to one lake among ten thousand, and it was not missed or regretted. Except by one man. To him that portage had led toward a treasure which he had found only to see it vanish. For him it was a symbol of bitterness, the lost portage to Lily-catch Lake.

For the fishermen who brought their best casting rods and occasionally their wives or daughters to Arne Nelson's resort on the Red Cedar waters last summer, Griff Davis was both a marvel and an embarrassment. It was disturbing, for example, when you had gone off into the woods to return to nature and profanity, to have a guide with better manners than yours at your most urbane moments. You felt like apologizing to him when he cleaned your fish and cooked your camp-fire luncheon. It was annoying to hear him join in a political discussion, when the newspapers, two days old, were read around the log fire in the clubhouse at night, with more penetration and a better grasp of current affairs than you possessed. It was irritating to see him, in worn corduroys, lumberman's laced boots, and an old army shirt, making a more handsome picture of the ideal north woodsman than you in your expensive suit from the best sporting-goods shop in Chicago.

And it was almost enough to spoil your vacation to observe your wife endeavoring to start a motherly flirtation

with Griff, or to have your irresponsible daughter, who had already outraged your sense of the proprieties by getting into khaki breeches, always inviting this young man, practically your servant, over to your cabin after supper to play poker. But it was greatly comforting to have Griff tell you privately he knew where the grandfather of all the muskellunge was carrying on his hungry piracies, and to take you out alone, to tell you exactly where to cast, and to give you aid and advice in bringing to gaff or revolver shot a piscine buccaneer so big he would have frightened Izaak Walton to death. This perplexing Griff Davis was, it seemed, almost everything that a guide should not be, except that his canoe always brought in the most fish.

Professionally, Griff was ideal. He had woodcraft and watercraft, and he could expound them, if need be, lucidly and with scientific reasons, whereas Hank, the Swede, senior guide at Nelson's place, was an oaf of stubborn superstitions and a debased dialect. Between the two, of course, there was a mild feud; Griff's attitude toward Hank was that of the cavalier toward the peasant, and Hank regarded Griff with contempt as an amateur and a dude. When Hank's Scandinavian bile was most sour, he would mutter sinister remarks to the effect that Griff was no good because he consorted with Indians.

There was, indeed, a hint of the aboriginal about Griff now and then. It came and went, in taciturn moods, like cloud shadows across the lakes. Then you were struck with a certain wild quality about him—his tall, spare figure with powerful shoulders, like the Chipewewa type; his straight, black hair and almost aquiline profile; and a far-away look of repressed fierceness in his eyes. At such times, without being sullen, he gave you the impression of a man who wanted to be left alone with his work

and his thoughts. Then the mood would pass and he would join in the talk with a pleasant drawl which came from Kentucky or Missouri. With the change in manner, an air of embittered maturity would pass from him, and he would become what the normal Griff must have been, an athletic young man still in the cheerful glow of his college memories.

In the canoes when the bass were not striking, around the camp fires, and back in the home cabins at night, there was a good deal of talk about Griff, speculation rather than gossip. He was a variation in species so marked he aroused curiosity even in the most stolid of fishermen. The vacationers who came up from the south to the Red Cedar waters and, after a few weeks of intensified open-air life, went back again to their cities, wondered about Griff, asked questions of each other, and were disappointed.

"Why is he wasting his time up here, working as a guide with chaps like Hank?" Ellsworth, who was something important in coal back in Chicago, asked, as he gave his water-logged boots their nightly scorching at the clubhouse hearth. "I offered him a good job in my office, and he turned me down."

Mrs. Barclay, who hated the north woods and who should have married a tennis player instead of a fanatic fisherman, advanced the inevitable woman's theory that Griff was suffering from an unrequited love.

"Perhaps," snapped Mr. Barclay, who had experienced no luck that day. "Young men with broken hearts always plunge into the wilderness and hire out as guides at a fishing camp. This is the modern substitute for going away to Africa to hunt big game. But it's also likely that Griff is an embezzling bank clerk or a deserter from the army."

"Don't be sarcastic, William," answered Mrs. Barclay severely. "He's probably a rich man's son, doing this

for his own amusement, and has money enough to buy and sell you several times over."

Barclay thought of his modest salary as a teacher and of Mrs. Barclay's social ambitions, and was quelled.

"Hank's answer to him is, 'Arne Nelson's pet,'" said Ellsworth. "He eats with the guides, but he doesn't bunk with them."

"He has a room next to mine upstairs," testified Hatfield, who was a creature of the press. "He seems to spend his evenings writing letters."

"Yes, and some of them come back to him, too," cut in Morgan, who was Hatfield's canoe mate and colleague in journalism. "Sometimes when I get bored by my crazy partner's eternal babble about the fish he didn't catch, I take a joy ride in Arne Nelson's launch to help him bring back the mail from that jumping-off place in the woods called the railroad station. I've noticed that Griff is always getting letters returned. They're addressed to a girl in Louisville."

"There! Didn't I tell you?" exclaimed Mrs. Barclay happily.

"*Cherchez la femme*," retorted Barclay. "The poor girl has moved away and the postman has forgotten the forwarding address. There's romance for you!"

Mrs. Barclay expressed an intention of asking Griff about the girl, whereupon her William grimly gave warning that if she did so, and the outraged Griff threw her into the lake, she need not expect him, her lawful protector, to arise and give battle in her defense.

"Well, there is one thing sure," Ellsworth observed. "He has been up here more than one summer. He knows this country like a book. Hank says he is pally with the Indians down on the Flambeau reservation, too."

Hatfield had been studying a large-scale, blue-print map of the region, tacked on the wall.

"Say, what about this Lily-catch Lake?" he asked. "It's only one portage away from here. Any of you ever been there?"

None of them had.

"I spoke to Hank about it," said Ellsworth. "He grunted, 'Griff's lake. No fish. No trail. No good.'"

"But there's a trail marked on this map."

"Yes, I know. Then I asked Griff. He said it was always a hard portage, and now the timber is down all along the ridge. You can see a burned place on the west shore from here, in daylight. That's where the trail was."

"If Lily-catch has been let alone for a summer or two, the fishing ought to be good there now," mused Hatfield. "I'm going to speak to Arne Nelson about it. He ought to have the portage cleared."

"That will be a job for a crew of lumberjacks." With which Ellsworth clumped off to bed.

When Hatfield went upstairs he saw that Griff was in his room, writing, as usual. The idea came to him that this educated guide who spent his days toiling to make fishermen's holidays, and his nights in scribbling, might be an ambitious young brother in his own craft.

"Writing a book, Griff?" he called out.

"No."

Griff's tone was a rebuff, but Hatfield was a breezy person, and he kept on: "Is Lily-catch Lake any good? It looks interesting on the map."

There was a pause; then Griff answered:

"The portage has been lost. There's no luck in Lily-catch, anyway."

"Well, Morgan and I want to make the long hike across the divide and try for muskies in Arrowhead to-morrow. Can you take us?"

"I'm sorry, Mr. Hatfield, but I'm not going to do any more guiding on Sun-

days. I'll be glad to take you day after to-morrow."

At the breakfast table the next morning Hatfield merrily announced that he had formulated his theory about Griff. He was an apostle of the uprising proletarians, come into the wilderness to ordain collective bargaining between the oppressed guides and the capitalist fishermen for a six-day week and no hard portages.

But Griff did not spend his Sundays in idleness. In the early morning of that day, when the shadows of the pines on the eastern shore still stretched out like long, black fingers upon the lake, before the ghosts of the dawn mist had fled from the sun, he would put an ax, a crowbar, a frying pan, a tin pail, and a lunch basket into his canoe and slip away over the water toward the lost portage to Lily-catch. There he would cook himself a breakfast of coffee, bacon, and eggs; then he would take up his ax and start hewing a trail along which a man might carry a canoe through the debris of a forest overthrown.

Charred logs were piled up before him like barricades; bare, broken branches thrust themselves out toward him like spears; old tree roots torn from the soil caught at his feet like serpents. Over all the ruin the new underbrush ran like a wild surf of vegetation, tying the litter together with entanglements of saplings, bushes, and vines. It was a miniature jungle, often as high as a man's head, smothering down upon the twisted skeletons of the old forest and aspiring toward a new. With profigacy of sap and seed, in a hysteria of growth, Nature was hiding and healing the wrongs of her destructive angers.

As the sun rose higher, the heat in those fantastic and treacherous thickets became overpowering. Griff's eyes grew dim with sweat as he chopped and pried his way, with ax and crowbar, up to the ridge. Deer flies followed him

like furies, bringing blood with every quick bite; mosquitoes tortured him, reckless of the oil of citronella with which he smeared his face and hands. Hour after hour he would toil like a man possessed, not seeking detours, but cutting straight to the line of the old trail as he remembered it. When his wrist watch told him it was twelve o'clock, he would go back to his starting point, often only a rod or two downhill, and cook himself a luncheon like his breakfast. Then, after an hour's rest, he would return to his fanatic toil and fight his up way upward until he heard the warning bell for supper at the camp on Red Cedar.

There was no reason for this ferocious, single-handed assault upon the glacia which barred the carry to Lily-catch Lake, no sensible reason, at any rate. Arne Nelson had told Griff so when he made the suggestion of spending his Sundays in reconstructing the trail. There were at least forty other lakes which could be fished within easy reach of Red Cedar camp, and, moreover, Lily-catch always had been one of those places where the bass, for lack of abundant feeding, are pygmies. Griff knew all this, but he had persisted in his request for week-end leaves of absence from duty to gratify his whim. He had put it in the form of a demand, an ultimatum, and since guides were scarce, particularly guides of Griff's prowess, Arne had grudgingly given him the consent of the boss.

So, Sunday after Sunday, through July and into August, Griff struggled up and over the ridge toward Lily-catch Lake like Hercules at an appointed task. The sound of his ax came faintly over the water to the resorters who were spending a stupid day of rest around the camp, and they wondered. Hank, the Swede, explained to them, with a malicious grin, that Griff had gone crazy, and was therefore not to be trusted in a canoe; but in spite of his

eccentricity the toiler at the portage remained as popular as ever. His strange moods, when he seemed to withdraw his ingratiating personality into a cave of silence, became more frequent, however; and the strain of his galley slave's labor, added to canoe-carrying six days a week, was making him gaunt and hollow-eyed. His good humor was fraying out, also, and there was something ominous in the fierce, proud reserve with which he refused to accept any flippant remarks about his passion for the lost portage to Lily-catch Lake.

The Barclays had long since gone back to begin another humdrum year in a middle-class flat; Ellsworth had returned to his traffic in coal; all the early comers to Arne Nelson's place had drifted away to their respective professions or jobs. The nostalgia of the wilderness would lure them back to the land of many lakes again next summer, but until then they would be forgotten. They had passed on, and the peace of the Red Cedar waters was no longer troubled by their talk. Others of similar type, equally chatty, had taken their places in the neat, little log cabins, and some of these, too, had gone. Hatfield, the writer, had stayed, however, deserted by his partner, for he was hatching out his first novel, dreamed of for many a year, and the spirit which brooded over these lakes and forests released his imagination from its inhibitions. It was he who sat in his room of nights now, writing under the flickering light of a cheap, unshaded lamp, with the washstand as a desk, for Griff's nocturnal exercise with a fountain pen, inditing letters which always came back to him, had ceased.

Arne Nelson's huddle of huts for fishermen was not the only place of habitation on Red Cedar. At the north end of the lake, on a high point of pines, there was a house which fulfilled the

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dreams of every woodlander, a romantic chateau of rustic architecture, built by Tom Foley, notable in the political and industrial life of the State, whose hobby was for the simplicities of the outdoor life. "Observation Point," as Mr. Foley called his demesne, would have been a satisfactory country house anywhere, but for the land of myriad lakes it was luxurious. Foley was a bachelor who had built this summer house, he hinted, in the hope of spending his honeymoon there, but he had never succeeded in finding the right girl, so there he dwelt from July to September, a great man of the woods and waters, a jovial, middle-aged veteran of metropolitan affairs, holding masculine house parties. Any one who stayed on the lake for more than a week scraped up an acquaintance with Tom Foley, and those who could speak his language became his dinner guests and friends. Of these Hatfield was one.

Foley's last house party had said its farewells, and he and Hatfield were dining together on his screened veranda, like lawless sybarites, with a haunch of venison, killed out of season, in the place of honor on the table. The buck, Foley explained with a wink as he reverently decanted a vintage wine, had committed suicide in the back yard. A civilized half-breed, addressed as Bill, Foley's guide by day and butler by night, slipped about in moccasins, keeping their plates filled until, barbarically gorged, they thirsted for liqueurs and yearned for cigars.

The twilight of the north woods, which is a long, still enchantment, was slowly evoking the mysteries of the night. Back in the woods a wolf howled. A hurried rustling through the foliage on the nearest shore symbolized a deer. On the water, close enough to cast to from the veranda, there was a sudden splash and then a widening of encircled ripples, where a big fish had leaped.

And from across the lake the evening breeze brought a strange, unusual sound, a dull and constant throbbing of changing rhythms, monotonous and sad.

Foley cocked his ear to it and listened for a while. Then he said:

"It's an Indian drum, of course. And it comes, I think, from Lily-catch Lake. But why? This is the time the Indians come up from the reservation to harvest the wild rice, but there never was a rice bed on Lily-catch, and there is no Chippewa ceremonial in connection with the gathering of the rice that I know of. If there was, they would pull it off on the reservation. What do you make of it, Bill?"

Bill, the butler-guide of mixed ancestry, looked serious and answered:

"Indian magic, I think."

"What kind of magic? What does it mean, you superstitious scalawag?"

Bill listened thoughtfully to the drumming, and then said:

"It is a call. It carries a message. But not to any one who can hear, like you and me. To some one far away, many miles, maybe, who will know what it means and must answer."

"Did they teach you that at Carlisle?" asked Foley ironically.

"Not at Carlisle," Bill admitted with a sheepish grin. "But I have heard of such things when I was a boy and lived with my mother on Court Oreille. The old medicine men will tell about it sometimes, when the school-teachers and the priests are not around."

"It's probably some tomfoolery of Griff's," Hatfield declared. "He's made a new portage to Lily-catch Lake, you know, and he is said to have a hankering after Indian lore. He's a curious kind of chap. Sometimes I have thought there is a strain of Indian in him."

"Griff is a Chippewa," Bill informed them. "Oh, not by birth. He is white. But he has been taken into the tribe

as a blood-brother. He can talk Chip-pewa better than me."

"That doesn't surprise me; I suspected something of the sort." This from Foley. "He has been coming up here four summers, except the one he spent in the army. This is his first season as a guide. I've heard he used to go down to the reservation for the corn dance and all the other big Chip-pewa society events. He's had some big unhappiness, I think, and has gone morbid. Too bad. I'd like to put him to work for me. He has a college degree as a civil engineer, and I could use him."

"Let's go over to Lily-catch to-morrow night if this tom-tom business keeps up," Hatfield suggested, "and see what's going on."

But Foley voted against the expedition.

"He's a sensitive young man. We'd better let him alone. If I was having a private little orgy of occultism on a lonely lake, calling up spirits from the vasty deep with an Indian drum, I wouldn't want any skeptical palefaces prowling around, would you? And I might make things unpleasant for them if they came."

Hatfield agreed; and as they talked cheerfully on over their glasses, about Griff and his eccentricities, about women and their peculiarities, and about everything else, the drumming from Lily-catch Lake continued, dull, morose, and troubled, like a broken heart telling of its long bitterness or an uneasy conscience confessing an old sin.

For a week longer the Indian drum muttered its nocturnal secret from the deserted lake. Then, one rainy morning early in September, when nearly all of Arne Nelson's guests had departed, his launch, returning from the railroad station, brought in a solitary passenger—a young woman.

With his binoculars Griff Davis

watched the boat come nosing out of the distant channel and into the home lake. When it reached the dock he had disappeared from the camp.

She was not the kind of girl who could plausibly wander into a north-woods fishing resort, unannounced and alone. Even by ardent sportswomen of mature years and infinite emancipation, that sort of thing isn't being done. Arne Nelson himself, recognizing her as a guest of three summers past, was surprised to find her unaccompanied, and was moved out of his phlegmatic disposition to ask if her father and mother were coming up later. No, she answered, and she intended to stay only a few days. If she decided on a longer outing, she would telegraph for her maid. Hay fever, thought Arne, and having thus reduced the unusual to the commonplace, he called his wife to find the newcomer a suitable billet.

Delicately made, she was; frail and tall, dark-haired, and of a wistful, refined comeliness. There was an old-fashioned gentleness about her, a true quality of reserve, a shyness that was not coy. Her face was very girlish, but in the cold, level gaze of her eyes there was an intimation that she had lived through some adult distress.

After luncheon she changed from traveling dress to khaki and went off for a tramp through the woods. She returned in about an hour, wandered around the camp irresolutely, and then asked Arne Nelson for a canoe. He suggested a guide also, but she refused to have one.

"Is there a boat on Lily-catch Lake?"

There was once, he told her, but it was probably waterlogged or rotten.

As she pushed off from the landing place he called out to her, advising that she stay within sight of camp. She did not answer, but when he saw her experienced, steady paddle stroke, holding the canoe straight on its course, his worries ended.

She went directly to the portage once lost, tied her canoe up to a burned stump, and took the new trail, surprised by the desolation through which she passed. On the crest of the ridge she paused to scan the shore line of Lily-catch for a glimpse of the old boat. It was down there, by the foot of the trail, the mere skeleton of a rowboat, imbedded in slime and weeds; but near it, nodding jauntily in the ripple, was a fresh canoe, clean, unscarred, with paddles properly stowed. She was not astonished; she had expected something of the sort; she had thought that there might even be a man, as well as a canoe, waiting for her.

There is an island on Lily-catch Lake, a fair, green island, well wooded, with inviting bays and gravelly beaches, so placed that it seems like a gem for which the lake itself is a setting, an emerald rimmed with turquoise. It is like a place for a shrine where happy pilgrimages may end.

The girl went there unhappily.

In the heart of the island she came to a clear, high place over which a few great pines towered like cathedral pillars, with the voice of the wind always whispering in their upper branches. On either side, one could look down and see the waters of the lake through the barred pattern of tree trunks. A camping place was there, a pile of fire-scarred rocks with a notched stick set slantwise above, a rustic table made of saplings, an old lean-to of withered spruce branches. It was as she had known it three summers before; nothing had changed. She sat down on a log to rest, to think, and to wait.

After a while her eyes fell by accident on the trunk of the tallest pine, the island's sentinel, a tree for eagles to nest in. She saw some lettering there, carved deep into the bark. It was no new work; the letters had grown black and were warped with the tree's growth. She walked over close to the pine to

see more clearly, and she read this inscription:

GRIFITH AND VIRGINIA

June 27, 1916.

She gave a hurt little cry and turned away. Then she saw him coming out of the thickets toward her.

There were no greetings. They stood and looked and were silent, she resentful and defiant, he timid and entranced, as if he were seeing a ghost. Finally he spoke.

"So you came. You answered the call."

"Call? I did not read your letters."

"I know that. But there was another message. You heard it and you came to see me."

"I did not come to see you. I knew you were here, of course, from the postmarks on the letters this summer. I knew if I came, I would probably meet you. I did not want to. There is nothing for us to talk about. But it seemed to me that I had to come, that I must visit this place again. I thought I might find some peace of mind here, in spite of you. It is as beautiful as ever. Some of the happiness came back to me as I sat there. Then I saw that!" She pointed to the inscription. "Why did you do it?"

"To satisfy my conscience. I hoped it might even help to satisfy yours, which is something more than a conscience; it is an exasperation."

"It is like the inscription in a wedding ring."

"That is what it might have been. That is what it should have been. It means just that to me."

"When did you put it there?"

"Soon after you left that summer—after you ran away from me."

"Any camper who wanted to come over here would have seen it—people who knew me. What would they have thought? There was too much talk about us already."

"Or perhaps they might have stopped talking if they had thought we were married. But they had no chance to find it, the campers of that summer. I decided that no one should come here to our island, the island of our wedding night, for that is the way I think of it. So I destroyed the portage."

"How could you do that?"

"I set fire to the woods along the ridge. It was a great fire. I enjoyed it. I was half mad, I think. Then a high wind finished the work for me. All along the ridge it was impossible to carry a canoe. Since then it has just been *our* island. The *Ile de Cache*, the old, French trappers used to call it, for they stored supplies here; Lily-catch is a curious corruption of its real name. Our island was then a thing apart from the world. No one came here, except a stray Indian now and then. I put our island back into the wilderness, where it belonged. It became a wild, lost thing, like our love."

She shrank from the word.

"Don't call it that, please! But I don't understand. The portage is open; I came across it."

He smiled wearily.

"I cleared it, a few weeks ago. You see, I had to come back, too. Something called me. It was a dog's job. Then I sent for you."

"You know I have never read your letters. And telegrams I always had opened by some one else, to make sure they were not from you."

"I sent for you, nevertheless. The Indian way. And you came. I thought you would."

"I do not understand you, Griffith. I never did."

"It is something of the spirit. I cannot explain it to you. But you are here. After three years I am seeing you again. Or are you really here? Are you a vision?"

He stretched out his hands toward her.

"You must not touch me, Griffith!" she exclaimed sharply. "See!"

She slipped her hand into the pocket of her skirt and took out a small revolver.

"Remember, you taught me how to shoot."

The lines of pain between his heavy eyebrows deepened, and he dropped his head.

"This is very humiliating, Virginia, but perhaps I have deserved it. You were a bad pupil at revolver practice, however. Put that gun away, please. I shall not come near you."

She obeyed.

"And now, let me say my say. It is very simple. We belong together. You are my girl. There never was any other; there never will be any other. We were two romantic children that evening." He pointed toward the date carved on the pine tree. "There was a mystery in the air. The mystery which ordains that leaves shall bud and trees shall bear fruit, that the birds shall nest and the doe run with the buck, and the fish play together prettily over their stone spawning beds. It is white witchcraft, fairy enchantment, love magic, and the command of a god. It knew that we were mates—and it mated us."

"It parted us, you mean. But for that, I would have married you."

"You would never give me a promise. You were always evading me, saying that we were too young, trying to treat it as an episode instead of something permanent. Well, I have hurt you badly. You were too civilized for such a thing. And I have hurt myself, too. You do not know how much. Tell me, Virginia, are you married now?"

"Of course not."

"Engaged?"

"No. But there is a man who wants me. He is nice—and comfortable. I might marry him."

"Do you love him?"

"I have never been in love with any one but you, Griffith. And you made my love a hate. Yes, I am glad to have a chance to say it. I hate you! I have hoped you would die. During the war, I used to read the casualty lists, looking for your name there. You were not kind to me, Griffith. You would not let me go while you 'moral-lectured' me! But you did not care anything about what it would mean to me."

"I wanted you to go back without fear in your heart, to be able to say, 'That is the man I have chosen. I love him, and we shall marry.' I always tried to teach you not to be afraid of anything."

"They pretended to believe my story, but they didn't."

"Then you lied to them? That made it worse. That made you hate me all the more, and keep on hating me. One cannot live with a lie and be clean. It was my fault, of course. Say you forgive me."

"I will, when I am able to forgive myself. If you want to do something to help me, please stop thinking about me, forget me altogether. You haunt me, somehow. There is nothing left in life for us together. Now give me your knife."

He drew his hunting knife from its sheath and handed it to her hesitantly. She went to the great pine and slowly, with care and determination, cut out the souvenir which he had carved there. He watched her sadly. When her work was finished she returned the knife to him, with a sigh of relief, and said:

"Now we have done with the past altogether. I think that when you call again in your Indian way I shall not hear you. Good-by, Griffith. No, we will not shake hands. I am going back alone, and I shall leave the camp tomorrow. What are you going to do with yourself, I wonder? You shouldn't waste any more time playing around these woods. You look very worn and

tired, Griffith. Please try to become civilized and responsible. Well, good-by."

She turned abruptly and started away. He called out her name harshly, and she stopped.

"Virginia," he said in dull, hard tones, "I am going to stay here on this island three days. I have built a little shack back there in the woods and have some supplies in it. Tell Arne Nelson that I have resigned. I am going to wait here for you that long. On the morning of the third day, if you have not come back to say that you will marry me, I shall take the only trail there is left for me. I shall go on the Long Traverse."

"What do you mean?"

"When the old fur traders up toward Hudson Bay caught a man from a rival company poaching on the land they claimed as theirs, they sent him on what they called '*La Longue Traverse*.' They didn't kill him. They just gave him to the wilderness, without a gun, without a canoe, without flint and steel to make a fire, without provisions. And he would never come back."

"You mean you will try to starve yourself to death? Don't be silly, Griffith."

"No, not that. But I shall give myself to the wilderness, just the same. You know the river that runs north out of this lake? I took you into it once to show you the beaver dam and the lumber camp. Well, that river drops straight down into Lake Superior, falling more than a thousand feet in about sixty miles. It becomes a roaring torrent between walls of black rock, with reefs that are sharp as a pike's teeth. No Indian has ever shot those rapids, although the Chippewas used to send their smallpox patients down them in the old days, to get them out of the way. That will be my Long Traverse. When I get to the rapids, I will throw away the paddle. It will be a good way to go—skimming through the white

water, missing this rock and that, not knowing when the end will come. I shall like it while it lasts."

"You will not do this, Griffith?"

"I will. I must. If you don't come back. It is an old plan of mine. I have often thought of it. That is one reason why I cut through the ruined portage. It will be good to stop thinking about you—and talking to you in my imagination—begging—and remembering."

She studied his set face and believed him.

"Very well," she finally said. "That will be like you, reckless, headstrong, and pagan. It will be a sin, but you do not care."

"No; I will trust my soul to the god of the Chippewas. When I am ready to start, soon after sunup on the morning of the third day, I shall fire three shots to say good-by to you."

"I shall not hear them. I am going back to-morrow. Good-by."

He watched her as she slipped through the trees toward the beach where she had left her canoe, but she did not turn back.

Soon after sunrise on the third day, Griffith Davis awoke from a feverish sleep in his island shack, and began to prepare for his Long Traverse. He was haggard from waiting and watching, but now that the beginning of the end was at hand, his only emotion was impatience. He wanted to get it over with as soon as possible.

He made his fire, shaved himself carefully while his coffee was boiling, and then ate a little breakfast. He thought of making a will, distributing his binoculars, his rifle and revolver, his fishing rods and reels, and his other personal effects, a sad little estate, among Arne Nelson and the guides at Red Cedar as remembrances; but as he looked about for a birch tree from which to cut a sheet of bark for this

document, he lost interest in the idea. To confess to these unemotional men of the woods that he was a suicide did not fit into his code. Let them think what they would; let them take what they found. His pride rejected the sentimentality of last gifts. To disappear silently, to be forgotten quickly, that was his desire.

He picked up his revolver and loaded three chambers in the cylinder. A curiosity seized him to know if his hand were steady and his eye true, and he looked about for a mark to shoot at. He came to the clear space of high pines where he had talked with Virginia, and his gaze fell upon the new scar on the great tree, where she had hacked out his inscription. He smiled grimly; it was an appropriate target. He fired at it deliberately three times, and was pleased to see that he had scored bull's-eyes. The shots rent the tranquillity of the still, sunny morning like a defiance, and their echoes blundered briefly back and forth across the lake.

It was his last message to her. He was certain that she had heard it. He knew that she had not gone away, for each day from the Red Cedar end of the portage, with his glasses, he had watched Arne Nelson's launch start out for its daily trip to the base of supplies, and it had not carried any passengers.

Then he walked down to the shore to put his canoe into the water. There was no need to wait any longer.

She was standing by the canoe to meet him, white and sad, all her prettiness erased with anguish.

"It is not what you think, Griffith," she answered to his joyous exclamation. "We are just as far apart as ever."

"Then why did you come? To try to stop me?"

"No; I did not think I could."

"Please, Virginia, be kind and let me finish this thing my own way. If you did not come as I wanted you to come,

there is nothing more to be said between us."

"I have been thinking it over, Griffith," she said weakly. "I have hardly slept at all, except a little last night, in our old lean-to, there. I came over at midnight. Well, I've come to a decision. I can't let you go the way you want to go, exactly. All my life I would be tortured with the idea that I had murdered you. And I will not promise to marry you. You can't conquer me this way. So we've come up against a stone wall. Oh, I'm not going to beg you to give up your plan of going down that river. You will not give in, any more than I will. We're both of us too proud and stubborn. But there is one way out."

"What is it?"

"I am going with you down the river to the end of everything. It will be better for both of us."

He made a gesture of shocked denial.

"I want you to take me. Our last canoe trip together, as it was when we were happy. And if you refuse, I am going to follow you in that other canoe."

He did not answer for a while, and then he said quietly:

"Have you gone mad, too, Virginia?"

"I can't live with this unhappiness any more than you can. And the only way out of it which I can take with you is down there"—she pointed toward the north—"on your Long Traverse. Are you ready to start?"

"You haven't had breakfast," he answered gently. "Let me cook you something."

"I'm not hungry."

"Well, a drink of coffee won't hurt you. Come back to the shack with me."

She followed him reluctantly, expecting a stormy scene of arguments and entreaties. He said little, however, but busied himself assiduously with coffee-pot and skillet.

"Don't bother so much, Griff. I can't eat."

"A nip of abolished freedom will encourage you," he said, pouring out for her a small drink of whisky. "It must have been a cold night in that lean-to without a blanket. Take this shot of skiddewahboo, like a good squaw. There, isn't that better? Heap good fire water. Now for some bacon and coffee and my well-remembered flap-jacks."

"You're a good cook, Griff," she said, trying to eat.

"My only domestic virtue. More coffee? With cream from the tin cow?"

"No, thanks. It's good of you to be cheerful about it."

"Mere stoicism, Virginia."

"I've finished. Well? Is it to be together?"

"If you want to go with me——"

"I do."

He led the way to the canoe and launched it. She stepped into the bow.

"Shall I take a paddle, Griff?"

"Please, no. Sit down in the bottom and lean back against the stay and rest yourself. I want to see your face all the way."

They moved slowly toward the mouth of the river, she looking back to watch the *Ile de Cache* blend away into the shore line. The tall pine on which her name had been carved was her last glimpse of Lily-catch Lake as they turned into the narrow channel of the river, along which gray tamaracks brooded uncannily in the swamp land.

She seemed very exhausted to him as he swung at the paddle, always with his eyes fixed upon her face.

"You might try to take a nap," he suggested. "It will be more than an hour before we come to broken water."

"I want to see everything," she answered softly. "The old beaver dam and the frightened muskrats swimming to the banks and the water lilies gone to seed, and maybe a porcupine on that lit-

the patch of bushy bog, so close to us we can touch him with a paddle. Do you think there will be a porcupine on it again, Griff? The tamarack is a rather ghastly tree, isn't it? We ought to startle some ducks, too, a wise, old mother mallard with some foolish children not quite grown up. Of course, we're sure to annoy one of those silly herons at his fishing. And, oh, if we could only come across a deer drinking, with a spotted fawn beside it!"

They went on leisurely around many bends, until the river began to widen and to deepen, and the banks moved backward faster, although he did not change his stroke at the paddle. He listened to her quiet talk, making few answers, but always watching her face.

An hour passed; the shores became high and rocky, and a murmur invaded the silence of the forest. It swelled into a wild, rushing trouble in the air.

"What is that curious noise, Griff? It's growing louder. So loud!"

"It is the sound of the first cataract. We will soon start downhill, Virginia."

"And what are you crooning under your breath so strangely?"

"The death song of my tribe."

She closed her eyes.

"Are you afraid, dear?"

"Horribly. Horribly afraid. I wasn't before. It has just come to me. Griff, when we get there, and you throw away the paddle, let me come closer to you, and take me in your arms very gently and hold me always. Don't let the river tear us apart at the very last. Then we will be really together again."

He gave a great, savage cry of grief, and with furious strokes drove the canoe toward the shore, fighting the current which was sweeping them swiftly along. She called out to him, but the roar of the wild water close ahead kept the sound of her voice from

her own ears. The river was hungry for its sacrifice. Between them and the teeth of black rocks in a slaver of foam it was a matter of a few seconds, of a paddle stroke or two, of all Griff's strength in prayer. But they made it, and soon, up to his knees in water already a rapid, he brought the canoe, with the pale, strange girl huddled in it pathetically, to beach.

"We're going back," he shouted in her ear against the clamor of the river. "I'll have to carry the canoe a mile until we reach the slower current. Go ahead and try to pick out a way for me through this underbrush."

She obeyed silently.

Before he launched the canoe again for the upstream voyage, he turned to her to say:

"You've beaten me, Virginia. It's ended, all that madness. I can go on now. I can do without you. I can let you forget me. You have given something back to me that will comfort the ache and the want of you. I know now that you don't hate me—that when you think of me it will be kindly. Oh, my dearest, when you were so frightened I knew that all I wanted, all I really needed, was for you to be happy and safe from harm! I have forgotten about the rest of it already, I think, and I believe you have, too. So it's going to be all right when we say good-by, isn't it?"

"I'm sure it is, Griffith," she answered, and held out her hand to him.

But a few days later the priest from the reservation came up to the *Ile de Caché* to read the wedding ceremony, with Arne Nelson and his wife, Tom Foley, and the tribal chief as witnesses. And a new inscription linking the names of Griffith and Virginia was carved under the raw scar on the giant pine.





The Family Tradition

By Katharine Haviland Taylor

Author of "Barbara of Baltimore,"
"Yellow Soap," etc.

CHAPTER I.

RITA PARET settled by her mother's dressing table and looked around her mother's boudoir. It was done in lavender and peach-pink, with occasional touches of silver, and it always made Rita think of those more intimate scenes in the straying-husband movies. It seemed to be waiting for the vamp and the husband—no, not the vamp's husband!—who had to follow her until reel six was reached. Therefore, it was with a feeling of anticlimax that Rita looked up to see her mother coming toward her from a small, adjoining room in which were hoarded the secret means of manufacturing a great bluff. Mrs. Paret had some of the secret means with her, in a pasty smearing of white upon her cheeks, and her hair was being dressed, which made her head look rather cold.

"Busy every minute, *every* minute to-day!" she announced. She was given to repetition, which had the effect of imparting to her words a weight which they did not deserve.

Rita muttered something which might have been, "You must be tired."

"Perfectly exhausted, *exhausted!* Hortense, my eyebrows! You have forgotten my eyebrows. *She is getting worse every day!*"

Rita looked after the condemned Hortense, who had gone eyebrow hunting in the room of mysteries. "You know, mother, she's getting old," she said, and her defense was generous, for she had always felt the chic, old Frenchwoman's scorn.

Mrs. Paret did not answer this. She had squirmed around in front of the triple mirror until her wide back was upon exhibition. She studied it critically. "Fortunate to be plump," she mused, "in these days of no backs, *very* fortunate."

Rita agreed; her life was largely a matter of agreeing, which was good, since it was the only thing she could do at all well. Her mother was plump. While in dinner dress no one would have known whether Mrs. Paret was coming or going if her face and her feet hadn't definitely fixed the matter; she was so strapped in that she bulged wherever possible and, in the evenings especially, looked like a rotund sofa pillow confined by a tightly drawn shawl strap.

"And now, whom did you see?" demanded Mrs. Paret.

Rita drew a deep breath and endeavored to marshal into line the stray bits of gossip which had come her way during the course of the afternoon. She was, in spite of her almost-never-alone existence, shy about talking before servants. That, and her mother's tastes in decoration, invariably made her feel a stranger and apart. Because of these differences, which were only two of many, chatting in her mother's room was even more difficult for Rita than chatting elsewhere; and she was not a person of easy speech, at best.

"Well, Seamour Ogden Jannis was there," she began rather falteringly.

"I hope you met him?"

"Yes, I did."

"You mentioned his book, I suppose?"

"I'm afraid I didn't," answered Rita dully. She felt the maid's contempt and, through the absolutely lineless, expressionless face of her mother, irritation. "There were so many people around him," she explained in semi-apology, "and it was so noisy. The music was too loud."

"No matter, no matter! answered Mrs. Paret, "but if you want a man to notice you, notice him."

Years before, Rita had blurted out a statement to the effect that she only wanted to be let alone, but blurting out things of that sort had been discouraged. She almost never wanted to any more.

"Teddy van Buren was there with Claudia Marshall," said Rita.

"Thought his uncle died."

"He left him nothing."

"Oh, I see."

"And the Smithsons. They came in on the *Olympic*, Tuesday, I believe. The funny, little woman Arlis James is taking up was there. They seem great friends."

"Friends?" snorted Mrs. Paret. "*Friends?* Arlis is taking her up to cover her husband's infatuation. I pity her, I pity her! Arlis hadn't spoken to George for five years; that is, when they hadn't company, and she was so happy. She confided in me that her married life had been ideal, and then this woman came and talked to him—Hortense, that towel is too hot!—asking him about his golf and his gout and dear knows what not—Hortense, you will scald me! And, of course, the poor, silly fool enjoyed it, positively bleats if she is out of his sight. Before she came, he was perfectly content to sit quietly and read the *Wall Street Journal* after he came home, which was eminently proper, but now—now Arlis finds her home wrecked and her happiness flown. Hortense,

will you pay attention to the temperature of that towel?"

"It's too bad," commented Rita, although her thoughts were far away from the unhappiness of Arlis James.

"Did you see Maud?" asked Mrs. Paret in a low, muffled tone, the towel having risen.

"She's out of town, mother," answered Rita.

"She is?"

"Yes, she's with the Grant-Lethbys, I believe."

Mrs. Paret almost frowned, and this dangerously close approach to something which might have been an expression annoyed her desperately. With fingers which shook just a trifle she hastened to assist Hortense's great work, quickly rubbing that spot where had been the inclination to evince disapproval.

"I think I'll go off to rest a little while," said Rita as she stood up.

"Not going out again?"

"No."

"I am. Good-by, child."

Rita smiled, departed.

After Rita's disappearance Mrs. Paret smoothed the skin between her eyebrows and sighed deeply. The momentary satisfaction in Rita's dependability, which had called forth the "child," was gone; all she could think of was her married daughter's defection, the fact that she was off with a smart crowd who were not well spoken of. "People will talk," thought Mrs. Paret, "people will talk!"

When Hortense went off in search of her hair, Mrs. Paret turned her gaze toward a bedside table upon which stood the photographs of her family in silver frames. Her husband, who looked utterly tired and rather too patient and had been so unfortunate as to be camera-caught at that period when all males were photographed in evening clothes and wore their hair like barbers, was almost hidden by a bowl of Parma

violets; pretty Maud looked out from another frame; Rita, who, in spite of costly clothes, would look like the amiable wife of some one-thousand-dollar-a-year curate, had fallen over backward. These pictures caught but a fleeting glance, but Jacky, who was on formal occasions Brewster John Paret, caught and held her glance.

He was a weak-faced young man with a dimple in his chin and a too full under lip. But his face was not unattractive, for he had been photographed before his weaknesses had begun to mark him.

Mrs. Paret looked at him and smiled, although her face was softened from steam and the perfect repose of a pumpkin was the thing to achieve. Then she closed her eyes in a surge of fervent, inarticulate gratitude. For Jacky, at least, satisfied; he had a manner, he did the thing; and when he didn't, it was kept so quiet that people didn't talk.

A little memory of a red-eyed maid crept in to mar her entire rapture, but she dismissed this wraith peremptorily. The girl had been weak and vicious; she had set herself upon Jacky, who had been "but a boy;" she had deliberately—— Here Mrs. Paret dismissed the red-eyed maid, for Hortense was drawing near with a steel and sailcloth contraption into which the getting was not easy.

"Now," gasped Mrs. Paret as she stood up and held her breath, "now—Hortense—pull!"

And Hortense pulled.

CHAPTER II.

In her own rooms, Rita switched off the lights and went over by the window to sink down in a chair. Outside a slow, dismal rain descended, carrying down with its gentle insistence the last of the autumn leaves, to paste them to the pasty, taupe pavements. Umbrellas bobbed to make brilliantly shining black

blotches under the street lights, then to fade and become one with the night. The lights of the passing motors were dulled by the softly falling moisture, turned to a weak yellow; the city noises were so hushed that the silence spoke; it was a picture night for those who could see a picture without a proclaiming frame.

But it did nothing to Rita save to lessen her tension. Gradually she relaxed, half closed her eyes, and the insistent worries which had closely followed her since the morning's mail grew weak. She neglected them cheerfully. There was no hope of their being faithless.

During the course of fifteen minutes, the many voices of the afternoon, which clangingly echoed in her head, dimmed. She forgot the clever thing she might have said to the rising novelist, the stupid thing she had said to a lately divorced man, the way she had stumbled over Madam Langheim's rug-licking skirt in the crowd. Then her door opened and a maid entered to turn loose a blare of lights and, upon seeing her no-longer-young mistress, an apology.

Rita ignored the abrupt interruption, and stood up to be helped out of the frock which was pretty when she did not wear it. And then, comfortable in a negligee, a faint-pink negligee which brought into high relief every imperfection in her thick, blond skin, she again settled by her window, ordered a light dinner sent up, asked for her letter case, and, after taking it, dismissed the softly moving maid.

She read three letters as she waited for her dinner. The first two were written upon very smart paper and held the same pen trick, the long, overfull loops which indicate sensuality, the uncertainty of aim which tells some readers of a vacillating temperament. After she read the third, which was written upon a lined tablet and inclosed

in one of Uncle Sam's envelopes, she remarked, "I think I know why we are all so miserable."

The first she read was from her brother. After his characteristic address she read: "If mother hears it, she will be frightfully cut up. I don't want to worry her, but I wanted to go." That disposed of it, for Jacky.

The second was from her sister, Maud Paret Sears, and this was more elaborate in its evidence of selfishness. Maud had not got out of marriage what she expected to get.

"A great disappointment," she wrote—she was given to bubbling forth neurotic confidences—"I had supposed Rupert would be at least faithful to me, but—"

Rita turned the page hastily. Maud had no restraint, and in telling her sister of "all she had given to Rupert" made Rita feel quite as she had when, at seventeen, she had been taken to the wrong sort of a play in Paris. Mrs. Paret's French was faulty, and she had confused the sense of friend and lover. Rita had blushed a great deal during that evening, but she had not been so bored as when at the opera.

However, to go back, Rita laid aside her sister's letter, which ended after imparting the information that she was going to the Grant-Lethbys' because it would make her husband "wild;" she knew that her host and hostess were ordinary and that her going to their house would bother her mother, but she—

And again entered the all-important I, which so predominated in all the Parets save Rita.

The last letter was from Rita's cousin, who had a studio near the Village. She wanted Rita to tell her mother that she, Susanne—once Susan—Langdon, would soon be able to pay Mrs. Paret what she, Susanne, owed her, and she wondered whether Rita

couldn't come down to tea on Thursday, which was the next day.

Rita thought she would go. She liked Susanne, because she was unselfish, worked hard, and never seemed to feel, as Rita did for her, that her comfortably incomeed relatives might have eased her traveling of a rough road. Rita was as much at ease with Susanne as she was with any one, and would have been with her often if circumstances had permitted. But there were so many things to do, and Mrs. Paret saw that she did them; worse, saw *how* she did them and wanted to frown.

Rita forgot the letters of her terribly confiding sister and brother and lay back. The morrow promised a brief stretch of level going. For the most part she traveled steep hills and, although breathless, never felt that she reached anything that approached a top.

Susanne's studio would be a trifle chilly, but that never mattered. Rita would look at the latest picture, in which would probably figure a motor car—Susanne went in for commercial work—settle down before the tiny fire, talk as she never talked at home, stupidly try to help with the getting of tea, perhaps meet a few fellow artists, and then, curiously refreshed, make her way home.

She telephoned Susanne to make her enthusiastic acceptance. "I'll love coming," she said warmly. She was sweet when she was natural, unafraid, and allowed to forget herself through others. "I always love being with you, Susanne. It rests me."

"Dear child," answered Susanne, who was so tactful that she called every one over thirty, "dear child," or "my dear boy," "I'll love having you."

After she had said this and had listened to Rita's account of herself and her mother's cold, she turned back toward the fire, where sat the new man, the famous man who roomed across the way.

"My cousin," she announced, "Rita Paret, coming down to-morrow for tea. Won't you blow over?"

Her companion, who was exceedingly long, thin, sun-bronzed, and, in a queer way, attractive, shook his head.

"Keep away from 'em myself," he said, "afraid I'll begin to paint their portraits, and I still have a little respect for my profession."

Susanne laughed. "My dear *boy*," she protested—he was quite a few years beyond thirty and so she emphasized it—"Rita wouldn't sit for you. She is one of those poor, dear, good souls who understands herself. She is homely, awkward, timid, and rather pathetic."

"Who made her understand herself?" asked Dave Stoddard.

"Made her understand?" echoed Susanne.

"Yes; no woman sees herself. She only sees her reflection in some one's mirror. You've met those rather drab girls who bloom when love touches them."

Susanne was smiling.

"Dave," she said, "I didn't believe it of you! You always seem so hard."

"You think I'm sentimental," he muttered gruffly—he was embarrassed—"but I'm not; I'm only telling the truth." He stood up as he went on to say, "Perhaps I'll come over; don't know. Depends on the light. I've been going through hell with the light these last weeks—can't get what I want. And then sure as I do, Mary gets a chill and the gooseflesh rises, gets that queer green. Sometimes I could beat her."

"Scotch?" suggested Susanne.

"Drank it all when I was using her for the capitol murals. I had her heading a pack of laborers and farmers, leading them—supposed to be inspiration—"

"To the land, the carrot patch," said Susanne, "I know—well—"

"She put it away then—used to get faint every day. She's no good, but, Lord"—he broke off with a short, intense sort of laugh that was not mirthful—"Lord, she has it—the skin, the figure—"

He broke off, shaking his head.

Susanne nodded. She looked with some discontent in her eyes toward her own little-girl sort of canvases. The intense love of beauty that she sensed in the man before her belonged only to the true artist.

"Good luck!" she called, as he let himself out.

"Good luck to you," he answered. "May see you to-morrow."

Rita at that moment was crawling into her lace-draped bed. "I know just the kind of a rest to-morrow will be," she mused, "how it will divert me."

But she did not.

For the gods, who had, perhaps in the middle of an ironically humorous mood, made her plain and retiring as they put her in a butterflies' cage, were planning another game. Quite possibly one said: "It would be Eros, wouldn't it? You know his weak point is pity."

And it might be interesting to add that at the moment when Rita was crawling into bed David Stoddard was stroking a sinuous, black cat, rubbing against his legs. He had rescued her from an ash barrel when she was a kitten because—ah, well, each man has one weak point—he could not see things suffer!

CHAPTER III.

David Stoddard was correct in his idea about Rita Paret's understanding of herself; it had been forced upon her through others' estimate, and it had been done by her mother before she had really quite given Rita up. Mrs. Paret had a jaw that would have admirably fitted her to supervise a sec-

tion gang; she *intended* to teach Rita to say the right thing at the right time and to walk as if she were not first cousin to a flour sack. To say that she devoted herself to the forming of her daughter's manner, moves, voice, and laugh is but a faint description; she pursued the forming process upon every occasion, public or private, and, consequently, Rita was always falling over rugs and dropping things.

Indeed, Rita consequently inspired quite the most idiotic of the socially prominent tenth warders to sniggeringly propound a joke. It ran in this way and in a slightly thick, quite R-less American A-less voice: "Know what's the matter with Miss Paret. Yuh don't, what? I do. Lemme tell yuh." A dig in the hearer's unfortunate ribs. "Dropsy. Yuh see, she's always droppin' things, what? See—droppin' things—dropsy! Haw-haw!" He scored quite a triumph, because it made so deep an indent upon him that he never forgot the point of the story, which was really wonderful, considering his early training. He had been "ovah" so many times that he couldn't remember whether the Colosseum was in Rome or in London. The only thing he could locate surely was the "Folies Bergère."

But to get on—Rita saw herself imitated only a little while after her début, while she was spending the week-end at Marion, Massachusetts. She had been standing at the doorway of a crowded room trying to get up enough courage to make her entrance, when a young man of some superficial cleverness approached the tea table behind which sat his hostess.

"Imitation," he said, "of one of our this year's fair crop about to fall into the samovar."

Rita shrank under the protection of the curtain, but, being hidden by the shadow, continued to stay enough in the open to watch the show.

She saw her own self-conscious, awkward shamble, heard her voice faltering over "Tea with lemon? No—yes——" It was a good take-off; she could even feel her own heart pound as it always did when she spoke. "I think so, Mrs. Planchard, *th-thank you*——"

"I think that's rather cruel," said one girl who sat in the background, but Rita did not hear that. What came to her ears was the high mirth of easy-laughing, light-going, thoughtless young people who had never even touched the skirts of tragedy.

When she could move, she crawled off and went unsteadily upstairs. She found her mother, as she almost always found her, almost entirely surrounded by cold creams and rubber garments which were advertised to reduce.

"Come in, my pet," invited her mother, who was feeling unusually amiable. "And what has she been doing?"

"I wish to speak to you alone," answered Rita in so hard a voice that her mother looked away from her mirror and toward her daughter. She felt a faint stirring, which was hope. Rita's entire absence of flavor was what troubled her most; even an autocratic manner, which men did not like, was better than none.

After Hortense—then younger and more deserving of the attention which from racial reasons she showered upon her clothes—after Hortense had gone, Rita spoke.

"I am going home," she announced, her voice high and threatening to break. "I can't go on, mother. You'd better allow me to wear my glasses and become literary—or something. I can't do this. I can't go on. I won't—I——"

Mrs. Paret stood up. She closed the door which led into the adjoining room, where, she knew, her maid lingered. Then she sat down. She stated facts, which began with the pains she bore at Rita's birth, stated them as coolly and completely as if she had learned them

by heart, and it ended with Rita's acceptance of that or nothing, and so, of course, Rita accepted them all and apologized as she did so.

"I wish I could please you, just once," she sobbed. She was very thin at that period and she shook all over when she sobbed. It was so painful to look upon that Mrs. Paret closed her eyes and resorted to her smelling salts.

"Pray compose yourself," she advised weakly when she could command her voice. "You are upsetting me! Upsetting me!"

Rita tried to stop, because upsetting Mrs. Paret was a horrible thing to do. She tried very hard, and she succeeded in not sobbing aloud and confining herself to shakes.

"You will go down to dinner," stated Mrs. Paret, when the smelling salts had put in their work, "as if nothing had happened!" Rita nodded, mopped her eyes, almost respected her mother.

"I know I shouldn't—shouldn't care—that I—that I—should be independent, and that one must never g-give up."

"No," agreed Mrs. Paret warmly. "These are the people you must know, dear!"

Whereupon Rita's respect for her mother dropped nine points in one second. It is always extremely dangerous to play with the works or to see what makes them go! Mrs. Paret's wheels were wound by one little key, which was convention. However, Rita's true sight was short-lived, and from that day on she tried to please her mother in every way. She began that night when she went down to dinner in her prettiest frock, quaking from the fear that some one would see that her eyes were red.

When she went up to her room, some hours later, the fear was gone; something that turned her old and hideously despairing had taken its place, for no

one, *no one* had bothered to look at her eyes with enough attention to notice that they were red! And she knew that she was not even important enough to be a spectacular failure.

CHAPTER IV.

It was late when Rita reached her cousin's studio, and she found it lit only by two candles and the feeble blue flame of a soft-coal fire. She did not see the man who stood in the shadow, so her greeting was spontaneous, her own, and not the one that belonged to Mrs. Paret, which Rita sometimes borrowed to use with strangers.

"Dear," she said a little breathlessly—she had walked up the stairs, and they were many—"dear, I am so glad to see you. This is always a tonic. I feel at home here, and you are so *kind* to ask me. I think I'll keep my fur around my shoulders, thank you. I can stop for the entire evening, if I may, and—oh, I beg pardon, I didn't see—"

Her voice stiffened and her face changed. She put out a hand as she awkwardly acknowledged the presence of T. David Stoddard.

"I know your things," she said, as she remembered her mother's advice about making men see you, "I like them, but, of course"—her painful honesty was at most times her undoing—"I don't know a thing about good painting, and I always admire the wrong things."

Susanne smiled and David laughed outright. Rita looked a question. As it answered itself in her own mind, she colored and faltered out an apology. "I didn't mean," she stammered, "that yours weren't good; I only meant—"

"I quite understand," responded the man, who had settled opposite her. "I know what you meant, and it is a relief to meet a modern young woman who doesn't criticize one's space composition or prattle of tactile values. Sometimes I wish that this generation

might be weaned before it begins to criticize, but I suppose that is asking too much."

Rita colored and, with some embarrassment, joined her cousin's laughter. Men of her set rarely mentioned such things as weaning, but this man seemed awfully decent. She settled back to listen to his rapid-fire, often caustic, talk and to marvel at the glib ease of her untutored cousin.

The evening passed swiftly, and when, at ten, she spoke of telephoning for Jackson and the motor, David Stoddard objected.

"Let me take you home on a bus," he suggested, with a frank grin at her. "Really, you'd enjoy it."

He hadn't expected her to accept; in fact, the invitation had been little more than a gibe at her softly lived life, and, therefore, he was surprised at her pleasant answer.

"I would love it, of course," she said so quickly that consideration didn't hold back her words, "but it is cold and a long way, and you—"

"I'll enjoy it," he responded; "always get out before I sleep. Just suits me. Come along, Susanne?"

But Susanne shook her head. With a little tinge of irritation he followed Rita down the long stairs. Disgustedly he wondered whether she was an artist hunter, and what had made him offer his services for the long, unnecessary ride; but when, on top of a bus, she fell to talking, he was glad that he had made the proffer.

"I like," she said gently, "the look of things from here very much."

"Bully, isn't it?" he answered, "when the pavements are wet and echo the colors—"

She nodded. "Last night was like that," she said; "the street lights were pretty. I noticed it as I came home. I was tired, and it rested me." She stopped speaking, and when she began again he had to lean down to catch her

words. "I grow very tired," she confided, "of going places where every one makes so much noise talking."

"Why do you go?" he asked bluntly. "Well," she answered uneasily, "what is one to do?"

"I don't know. Say you won't?" "But suppose some one you cared for wanted you to?"

He wondered whether she was posing, dismissed the idea. "That, I suppose," he responded, "makes it different."

"It does," she agreed, nodding. "Sometimes," she went on, "I think that all the pain in the world comes from selfishness, from people who are not willing to think about how the thing they do is going to affect even the people whom they honestly love. It seems very strange—"

She made him think of a débutante fumbling over her first talks on love or Willy Baxter at his Baxterest, but he found her rather appealing, nevertheless, and he liked sincerity.

"Perhaps heaven won't be full of parties," he said easily. "Certainly yours won't be, if you're good here!"

She laughed and said she hoped it wouldn't, as she looked away suddenly. However, she had not looked away quickly enough to keep from him the sight of her eyes, which had filled with tears.

"My soul!" he thought, "the poor child," for so she seemed to him, even though his keen glance saw the little, faded marks of world wear about her.

"Look here," he heard himself say, "have you seen the exhibition at the Metropolitan?"

She hadn't; she'd meant to get there, but there had been so many things to do.

"Well, suppose," he was further astounded to hear himself say, "we go see it. It will be great for me, going with some one who doesn't pretend to scorn

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Durer for the way he did it. Say Friday morning?"

She thought Friday morning would be splendid.

"Then at eleven?" he suggested, as she told him it was her corner, and he rang. Eleven if it suited her, and they might have lunch together.

Lord, he thought, a day gone! What had made him do it!

Her acceptance made him forget the gone day, and the sudden color in her cheeks, the brightness of her eyes, made her pretty.

"Wearing the wrong colors, wrong lines," he mused. "I could fix her——"

And then they were at her door, and she was tremulously asking him in. He refused easily, reminded her of their appointment, and, after a firm pressure of her hand, turned to hurry off.

In her own room she did not immediately strip from her right hand its glove, but, instead, stood looking down at it. Then she looked up and at her new reflection in the mirror. She had never looked like that before, and she knew it; and she knew why she had never looked like that. She moistened her lips, and with unsteady hands took off her hat. She did not ring for her maid, but undressed herself, pausing now and again to stare ahead of her unseeing. When she did, she saw not a beautifully furnished room, into which money had poured everything that was rare and lovely and costly, but she saw a big, bare room, a man in the firelight, and his kind, understanding eyes as they looked on her.

She was thirty-two, and he was the first man who had really seemed to see her, after the first, appraising glance. If he only wouldn't be bored Friday morning. She sank down on the edge of her bed to close her eyes and to offer a blindly aimed prayer.

After David Stoddard reached his rooms he settled down for a peaceful

smoke and a little thinking about work. He had almost forgotten the incident of the evening when his gaze, resting on his large-figured calendar, saw under Friday's date, "Paret, 11."

"Damn!" he muttered. "Damn it!"

A black cat wandered up, rubbed against him, purred. He frowned. It seemed to him that there was a similarity between his discovering the cat and his finding the real Miss Rita Paret. Both had been miserable. He remembered the dragged, little, rain-soaked, ash-covered animal he had pulled from the refuse, and now——

"But one," he reflected, "takes only a saucer of milk a day, and the other would——"

However, the whole thing, thinking of it, was utter nonsense! A man wouldn't be trapped in a thing like that because he helped her, gave her a few simple good times! He looked down at the buzzing kitten, and, as he stroked it, thought of its misery gone, and, at the thought, he saw the face of Rita Paret!

"Oh, hell!" he said aloud, "I am a soft one!"

CHAPTER V.

But, although he was a soft one, he had no intention of marrying from the urge of a sentiment that often prompted him to retrace his steps for the sake of dropping a few coppers in the hat of a beggar; nor did he mean to become a cosmic figure in the life of Rita Paret. Therefore, it was with no pleasure and absolute chagrin that he sensed how matters stood one evening in early December.

He was sitting with Susanne, who was one of those rare women who are wise enough to allow men to forget their sex, and telling her of his latest work, which was a harsh portrait of a well-known play producer.

"Going to leave it," he stated, "undone. It'll live that way; people who

know him will hear his crisp tones in its roughness—you know——” He stopped, looking up impatiently, for he had been enjoying the talk of his latest consuming fire, and he resented the interruption, which came in the form of a knock.

“Come in!” called Susanne, adding in an undertone, “Damn you!”

Her companion laughed, and then stood up, for Rita had entered. “Why,” she said, high surprise in her tone, “I thought you were out of town. I thought you were away.”

He explained his change of plan and what had made it, while her unguarded eyes revealed far more than she dreamed. “Here I was, thinking of you up in the Maine woods,” she said, as she settled awkwardly, “and you’re *here*. I—I thought you were *away*!”

“Well, he isn’t,” said Susanne, with an indulgent laugh. She thought Rita was acting more than usually like a dear idiot. “Do get that in your head, and take off your coat.”

Rita unbuttoned it, flung it back.

“What made you come down?” asked Susafine.

Had Rita responded with truth she would have said, “Hunger,” for its ravages had turned her, for once, insurgent. She had boldly, and at the last moment, refused to go to the opera, and she had demanded the car Jacky wanted so that she might visit Susanne; her call made for the express purpose of seeing the ghost of a man whom she’d supposed to be—in the Maine woods. And now he sat before her in reality, and she found herself laughing too easily, stammering and not caring about it, looking at him with unusual boldness, because she could not help it.

“Wonderful frock,” said Susanne suddenly and with surprise.

“Mr. Stoddard designed it,” answered Rita. “I think it is beautiful——” She began to twist a heavy,

silver chain after her words, drew a deep breath, smiled radiantly.

“Never ought to wear silver with that sort of hue,” said David Stoddard quickly. “In fact, you ought to let silver pass. That belongs to the gray-black family, you know. Amazing how women won’t realize it. Every day one sees silver-toned women with gorgeous gray hair rigging themselves out in brown as if they were those ruddy-hued autumn maidens who deserve the reds. Your type needs light, gentle tans, dull blues, with never a touch of white—and gold——”

“Very few women should wear dead white,” agreed Susanne, as she flicked the ash from a cigarette. “Cream is less trying.”

They talked on, quarreling and agreeing, while Rita listened, not content, for the truly ecstatic are rarely content—that quality belongs to a cud-chewing cow—but feeling the new thing grow, strengthen, almost burst within her.

She loved his hands, the way he frowned when he very much enjoyed talking, a little, careless inelegancy which prompted him to say “don’t” when it should have been “doesn’t.” She shook when a certain light came into his eyes, a pleased light that flared when people caught his viewpoint quickly.

After the long evening was done, it seemed to her that his hands lingered gently as he helped her into her coat, and because she could not help it, she touched his shoulder as they went down the many narrow, dirty stairs.

“Difficult to keep one’s balance and pick up skirts,” she murmured.

“Must be,” he answered with some constraint.

“Won’t you,” she stammered, “won’t you ride uptown with me? Jackson will bring you back. I—I wish—you would!”

He refused firmly, explaining that his to-morrow was going to be full and he

needed a lot of sleep in order to be ready for it.

"Then," she said, "will you come to lunch some day this week? Any day? Mother is very anxious to know you."

If he had looked in her eyes, he would have weakened, but his gaze was, from embarrassment, fixed above her head. Stiffly he explained that he was going to be exceedingly busy for the next month or so and that luncheon engagements broke badly into his working hours. "Then dinner?" she said, for she had never learned that a man, to be held, must be pushed away.

"Frightfully pushed just now," answered David Stoddard. "I have mountains of work." His voice was jerky. "See you later—some time after Christmas?"

Jackson stood waiting, the motor door was open, and she stepped within. As they made their smooth way up-town she remembered that she hadn't said good night; not, she supposed, that it would matter much to Mr. Stoddard. She had not felt even an inclination to cry for many years, but she had to swallow quickly, to bite her lips to steady them.

She wondered, as the color rose in her cheeks, what she had done. He had said he wanted to come to the house because of the Corot her mother had recently bought. She remembered his delightful quoting of Oscar Wilde's Corot description, "silver mists and rose-pink dawns." He'd said he would come to lunch some time; she had supposed he wanted to and that he was enough of a friend not to cloak the refusal of an invitation with lies. But after she had accepted his luncheon-refusal reason as truth and substituted the dinner invitation, why did he—Her thoughts trailed off, and she lay back and closed her eyes.

From eight years back came her mother's voice, a shrill, uncontrolled voice that had grown bitter from disap-

pointment. "Always say something to antagonize, don't you?" her mother had questioned. "I heard you, spoiling what looked like a chance for some one's admiration! With my wit, my looks, why—why are you the sort you are, Rita?"

Rita had not known.

"If you could be tactful, people might forget your other lacks," went on her mother, "but while you always spoil your own chances for pleasure and in doing it—spoil mine——"

Mrs. Paret's voice trailed off in a limp, tired way, and she had lain back to close her eyes.

Rita often remembered that. It was one of the strings that had jerked her up and made her what she was, a puppet. On many occasions, when things had been progressing smoothly and pleasantly, her mother's hopes would intrude, Rita's face would grow strained, and she would say something overintense or overfutile, the sort of thing that lead even the charitable to say, "Queer girl—not quite all there, is she?"

When Rita got in she found that her mother was still out, and she was grateful. She had felt a new satisfaction from her mother, and it had warmed her gorgeously. Even Jacky had twice addressed her without the preface of "poor, old" which usually came before the "Rita." To be sure, on one of the occasions he had been after a loan; but the other, she had been sure, was spontaneous and a direct result of her new power. Some one who was very wise once said that half of a woman's charm lay in her knowledge of it. Rita had begun to feel that she must be a little better than she imagined, and because of that grew so; but now——

She passed her mother's door with gratitude for the omission of the grilling which had lately brought forth

no more from her than "I can't remember," in answer to, "What did you talk about?" Her lack of confidence had pleased her mother.

More than once she had ordered her off like a child, with, "Go along, my pet! You must get some new frocks."

And then, alone, had muttered, "Couldn't remember!" No money, of course, but some fame, and that—Hortense, I am ready to be massaged!—is better than *nothing!*"

CHAPTER VI.

When Mrs. Paret discovered that Rita was no longer making tours of the less-gilded, more-picturesque side of New York under the chaperonage of the rising young painter and sculptor, she chose to regard it as a lover's quarrel.

"Come, come, my pet," she invited, as Hortense applied her extra hair, "tell mother all about it!"

"About what?" questioned Rita. She looked at Hortense fixedly, but Mrs. Paret chose to regard the Frenchwoman's long ears as nonexistent.

"The rift in the lute," said Mrs. Paret playfully, if somewhat thickly, "the thing that makes my small pet droop."

Rita grew red, stood up. "I will speak to you later," she promised, and then, without further word, left the room. In her own room, she stood by a window, twisting a rose silk cord, staring at a gray, snow-weighted sky with dull, unseeing eyes.

After they step out of the nursery, success, for girls of her sort, is measured by the devotion of many, or a brilliant, widely talked-of marriage. This idea is somewhat changing, Rita knew, and example told her that many young women of decidedly sheltered rearing are adopting careers; but deeply in her heart, which in some ways had grown to be an echo of her mother's, rang the fact that true happi-

ness is captured by a small gold band. She frankly wanted marriage, for her mother's sake as well as her own; but now that ambition was fading, being swallowed up in one great desire, which was David Stoddard.

She wandered over to the mirror to survey the new person he had made her. She saw her hair allowed to remain straight, then banded in huge, taffy-colored strands around her really fine head. She saw the improvement that the little touch of blond rouge made—he had, one day down in Susanne's studio, taught her to put it on with gentleness and restraint; she saw what his designs in lines had done to give her grace, but she felt no thankfulness.

She was a different person, at times pretty enough to be arresting, but she wished—she wished she had remained in the chrysalis and had never learned to float, never become aware of her wings.

Being a person of decision and quick action, Mrs. Paret acted. She went down to T. David Stoddard's studio and burst in to attack him on the subject of portraits. He had no chance to say that he hadn't time to attempt more work at the moment, for Mrs. Paret was as voluble as if her perch had been a soap box, and as impassioned as a congressman orating over a bill for the preservation of hogs.

"My little pet," she said, as her gaze roamed over the canvases, "my little pet must be caught in the dew. I speak in symbolism. I feel that I want her as she is now, *young, careless, and sweet*. Where is my purse? Yes, yes, I have it—and so my thought naturally turned to you, and at my earliest opportunity I came here—you have no idea what a *rushed* thing my life is—to speak to you of doing it. Is that a landscape or a portrait? It is so difficult to distinguish nowadays! In

white, I thought, indicating her purity and sweet unconsciousness, holding a lily or something like that, with that smile upon her face which comes as she speaks of you. What a friend you have been to her, Mr. Stoddard! Who is that girl in the picture near the window? Oh—don't know them—*ordinary* face. Have you any idea how she values that friendship? 'My pet,' I said to her the other evening, after I returned from the Jigson-Smythes' dinner—you know them? No, I *supposed* not. They are cruising the Mediterranean in their yacht, which is the most *perfectly* appointed craft on the seas, I assure you! 'My pet,' I said, 'you must let me ask Mr. Stoddard here so that your sweet friendship may progress—'

David listened weakly.

After Mrs. Paret had quite finished and had rustled off down the narrow hall toward the stairs, he sat down on a window seat and rather vaguely fumbled around for his pipe and tobacco. He had never felt quite as sorry for any one as he did for Rita at that moment, and to add to his unrest was the great conviction in him that he had acted like a first-class cad.

"My gosh," he thought, as he lit his pipe, "I am an ass—an awful ass! To rush a girl like that and then drop her because I thought—" He stopped, shook his head, then puffed abstractedly and stared ahead of him. The memory of her look came back. He knew she cared for him, knew it better than even she knew it, although all hers, the misery and want.

Cursing softly, he looked back over their acquaintance, ruthlessly surveying his contributions to its fast ripening into friendship. He had taught her, from a sketch, to dress her hair, revealed to her the lines to follow, the lines to avoid, been loud in his directions about colors, trying through these

and other mediums to inspire in her some courage and self-belief.

"I've been a fool!" he decided ruthlessly, "A *fool!*" Again he puffed deep, his eyes still fixed and far-seeing from his reverie. "A fool," he thought less harshly, "but—God"—he saw her as she had been, stumbling, uncertain, miserable, from things that might be changed—"God," he echoed, "how could I *help* helping?"

And a cat came over to leap up on his knees.

When Rita heard about the portrait all of the color save that which she applied drained out of her face.

"But I can't," she whispered. "I can't mother, I *can't!*"

Mrs. Paret, who was getting ready for a round with tea, answered sharply.

"You can and will," she said, after which she spoke sharply to Hortense about her complexion, which was being applied on the bias. Rita opened her mouth to speak, then thought better of it; and Mrs. Paret, who occasionally respected her own confidences, ordered Hortense off. When she was alone with her daughter she leaned forward to lay a pudgy, much-bejeweled hand upon her daughter's slim one.

"My dear," she said, "unlike my other children, you have always tried to please me, *tried* to please me."

Rita nodded.

"Often in my despairs," continued Mrs. Paret, as she began to turn her energies to the making of a spit curl on her forehead, "I have held that dear fact close. And now—now that Maud threatens divorce and Jack is drinking again—"

Mrs. Paret was overcome and forgot the spit curl.

"He can catch your face as can no one else," she breathed. "And I—I want it so! My dear"—she was again herself—"I said, 'I must have my lit-

tle girl, my devoted, charming, greatly admired daughter——"

Rita smiled, but the quality of the smile was wrong.

"And he said that Friday morning at ten would suit admirably. Hortense, you fool, where is my brassière? All will be well, pet, all will be well! Now run along!"

CHAPTER VII.

Mrs. Paret accompanied her daughter for the first few sittings, but as time was precious and she was always "simply rushed," she gradually forgot the fact that "her pet" should be chaperoned, spoke vaguely of Susanne's being there, and it was two weeks from the day of the first sitting that Rita found herself alone with David Stoddard.

She had been sitting for him so stonily that he often wondered whether his conjecture could have been right, honestly hoped it wasn't, and then decided it was. The very quality of her repression revealed it as well as did anything.

"I hope you like it," he said, after she stood up and he had asked her to join him in front of the work. "Do you think that slanting light good? If you don't I'll cut it——"

"I like it, but I don't much care," she answered levelly. "This is for mother, you know. Entirely her idea, and I—I didn't want to come. I have been so busy. I was very foolish to tell you I disliked gayety. Of course I don't."

"Moods," he replied; "every one has them."

He was thinking miserably of what her most sustained one must be. Intercourse with Mrs. Paret had told him more of Rita's life than Rita ever could reveal. During the few sittings he had had occasional glimpses behind the scenes, and his pity for the unwilling star had become acute.

Mrs. Paret's voice was loud and far-carrying, and she quite overlooked the transom that was over the door which led to a little side room in which David kept such things as paints, brushes, turpentine, and palettes.

"Aren't you feeling well?" he heard during his making ready on the first morning. The answer was low. He didn't catch it. "Smile, my pet, smile! Remember, a man likes gayety, and since you and Mr. Stoddard were friends—now, now, you were!—you may be friends again, and who knows but Cupid may creep in to shoot his darts some morning! What is that queer-looking thing on the wall near the door? I do not understand his vogue! Mercy, what is the matter! You look positively leaden! My dear, I try to *help* you, to *show* you——"

At that point he had opened the door quickly and the assistance of Mrs. Paret ceased.

He could not imagine a more refined torture than that in which Mrs. Paret indulged. It was not Rita's fault that no one had loved her enough to marry her. The fact that she sometimes seemed a fool was Mrs. Paret's fault. David thought of these things a good deal, and the thought of them took him to Susanne's the evening after the second sitting. He wanted to talk of Rita, but, instead, he talked of other things.

"Hate dog acts," he muttered. "Don't you?"

"Yes," she answered lazily; then, with a laugh, "But why, Dave?"

"Oh, I don't know," he responded; but he did. Mrs. Paret had her act, which never came out quite as she wanted it to, her prize performer who never quite got the cues. Again and again he had thought of the cracking whip, the glued-on smile, of the proprietor of the trick canines, the painful wags which were made because a beating followed if they were absent.

"Some animal performances are

cruel," said Susanne, "but I suppose it is hard to train them and to keep them in training without beatings. Shall we have a rarebit?"

On the following morning David sent Rita some lotus blossoms. It was very extravagant of him, for the rent was due, two of his biggest pieces still not paid for, and all sorts of little bills had cropped out, as little bills do.

Rita thanked him for water lilies, which amused him a little. "I suppose she would have been quite as satisfied with dandelions," he thought ruefully and yet with some tenderness. It was so like Rita to thank people for the wrong thing.

David was right. Rita would have been quite as pleased with dandelions—if he had sent them.

He proposed to her on a morning just before the finishing of her portrait. Her mother had come in for the early part of the sitting, bringing with her an extreme dog-act flavor, the odor of her sachet, much silly comment, and an intense admiration of a landscape which was upside down. She felt that she was looking upon something "really good" because she was unable to sense it.

"Ah," she murmured, as she elevated her lorgnette to inspect the waves, which were, from some one's hasty placing, breaking where the sky should have gleamed, "*how that grips me!* And—ah—what is the—ah—subject?"

"Ocean," muttered David. He was with difficulty subduing a mighty inclination to laugh.

"No doubt some dear spot in Massachusetts?" probed Mrs. Paret.

"No; near Coney Island," answered David.

Mrs. Paret shuddered and dropped her lorgnette. The crudity of the ocean at that point made her speak to David of something which she felt he *should* regard.

"Mr. Stoddard," she said, after a deep, "Ahem," "I have long wanted to suggest to you that you use your second name for signature and business purposes. How euphonious is D. Terrell Stoddard! How balanced, how fine!"

"I prefer 'Dave,'" answered the recipient of her suggestion. She nodded coldly and left, muttering, "Impossible! Impossible!" all the way up to Eighty-sixth Street; then decided that, when she considered Rita, it was the best one she could expect.

About the time that Mrs. Paret's last "Impossible" sank, to die, David Stoddard gave up. He could not stand it. He did not know quite why Mrs. Paret's prodding at Rita so enraged him, but he knew that somehow it had to be stopped.

"Aren't you coming to see yourself?" he asked.

Rita joined him by the easel.

He laid down his brushes, palette, stretched, and then he turned to her, his tired affectation departing. "Rita," he said suddenly, loudly, "would you—will you—marry me?"

She swam before his gaze; he hardly heard her, "Oh, David!"

"If that means yes," he said, his voice still overloud and from nerves not at all his to control, "if that means yes, it's all right." He saw that she had hidden her face, suspected tears, and very gently put his arms around her.

"Rita dear, Rita?" he whispered.

She grew soft in his arms and, instead of holding away, pressed close. He felt her arms around his neck, drawing his face down to hers; he stooped, touched her lips, and never had he felt so much a cad. But when again he kissed her he no longer felt himself a cad; he only knew that kissing her was marvelously sweet, that her lips were soft, and that she loved him.

When he, very unsteady, incoherent,

spoke it was to say, "I think—I must have been very—hungry for that—"

It was by way of apology for senses that had leaped ahead of his understanding, but Rita saw in it only that he wanted to speak with her the language of love.

"Oh, my dear," she said, her voice a pæan of ecstasy, "I have wanted to kiss you, too. I *love* you so. I love you so *very* much!" Again he found himself holding her close, rather blindly seeking her lips.

After he had found them, and when he could speak, he promised her with an almost-agonized fervency that he would always "be good to her. Always, before God!"

She laughed beautifully.

"Good to me!" she echoed scornfully. "Beat me if you want to—I don't care—won't care—as long as I am yours."

She stayed for lunch with him. He found her feeble attempts to help him utterly futile, and grew almost maudlinly tender over them. But he would not see, he could not see— Years before, an affair had wiped from his soul the belief that he could care again, and he had closed the doors of his heart.

Something rapped within it now, but he turned aside, shamed as he heard the tap. For he thought the insistent nature of man, which is passion, lived without her larger sister, love. That these two walked close in him he was to learn.

After he had seen Rita home he thought of her long and made many vows. She should not miss what he could not give her; that he would pretend. And he would guard her, even from himself, the largest task; he was firm about that. And she should be happy as he could make her. His reverie broke, shifted, became chaotic, sweet.

He felt her in his arms, her lips against his—her lips were so soft—her arms. He found himself standing before her portrait, finding, through it, dissatisfaction. It didn't do her justice, didn't *half* do her justice. She had been beautiful, marvelously beautiful, after she had tightened her arms around his neck.

The artist in him tried to recall her look, but his heart diverted him.

He couldn't find his pipe; he looked for it fumblingly, foolishly. And he hadn't asked when he could see her. He sat down, telephoned. It took an incredible time to reach her. Her voice shook after she heard his greeting.

"David *dear*," he heard. It was the loveliest voice in the world; he knew it was! My God, why couldn't he love her!

"Well, I wanted to see you," he announced with a queer stridency rising in his tones, "and I forgot to ask; that is, you didn't say when—and I—"

"When do you want to come?" she prompted.

"Now," he answered, "and I want to see you alone."

"Hurry," she ordered. He heard her good-by, stood up. Suddenly he clamped his hand to his side and remembered his lighted pipe, which had gone into his coat pocket. He fumed as he dumped the smoldering garment in the sink and turned on the faucet.

Every damned thing was keeping him from getting uptown!

And the bus? When he at last reached Rita he swore that it had stopped every fifteen feet.

"I should have sent for you," she said. "I don't know why I didn't think of it, David."

Her eyes were asking a question, and he answered it. "I can't explain," he whispered after an interval, "but I—this—makes me ashamed."

She looked up wonderingly. Her eyes were as clear as crystal. He

looked away. "I won't fail you," he promised a little thickly. "Just trust me, and I'll make up for—the poor beggar you're getting—" The ending was not the one he felt inside. "I'll make you happy, dear; I will!"

They were in a dark-toned, really beautiful, book-filled room. She sank down on a broad, softly cushioned piece of furniture, and he settled by her. He didn't kiss her again for quite a while. Instead, they talked of the things that would be. In the middle of these he moved to rest her cheek against the roughness of his coat sleeve,

and when, perhaps seven or eight minutes later, she stirred, he spoke quickly, saying, "Don't; I like it that way, if you're comfortable, dear?"

She laughed up at him. He had to kiss her. "To think," he whispered, "that I thought my work on you was good; why you—" He stopped, baffled, then stood up, for Mrs. Paret was sailing in, triumph on her fat face, easily summoned tears in her china-blue eyes.

"My pet!" she breathed. "To lose my own last, little daughter! You bad, bad man!"

TO BE CONCLUDED IN THE MARCH ISSUE.



SCANDAL

A WOMAN sipped her tea
With guileless eyes of blue.
She sweetly smiled at me.
Between her sips of tea
She spoke a word or two.

"Their marriage cannot last—
He's always stepping out.
They say she has a past.
She certainly is fast,
Of that there is no doubt.

"She went to school with me.
Her father had to pay
Two thousand—was it three?
For them to let her stay!
You know what people say!"

The woman sipped her tea,
And hid a little yawn—
Then looked and smiled at me,
But I could only see
A reputation gone.

ANNE JELLETTE.

Ainslee's Books of the Month

MAIN STREET, by Sinclair Lewis; Harcourt, Brace & Howe, New York.

WHEN one has heard superlative praise and unstinting comment on a book before one is fully aware that it is "off the press" there is a tendency to one of two attitudes. Either one sniffs smugly over a good press agent's work well done—for experience has taught us that books are not always "what they're cracked up to be"—or one allows oneself to be worked up to a state of mild curiosity and that occasional recklessness when one cheerfully yields up a couple of simoleons at a book stall and thinks nothing of it.

Many things have been said of Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street"—all of them good, many of them unprecedented in the way of book praise and present-day literary criticism. One reviewer affirms with no lack of conviction that the book should be in every home and in every schoolroom. Well, maybe so. Another—no less a figure than F. P. A.—declares it to be the finest book he has read in as long as he can remember. Again, maybe so.

But there *is* no gainsaying the fact that out of a mass of pure piffle and sundry doubtful first novels and no end of sociological, historical, and biographical matter—all of them in their places good—"Main Street" presents itself as a cool, refreshing oasis. Once more we have the setting down of the age-old struggle between materialism and idealism. But there is here no moralizing, no empty preachment. By his very nonpartisanship the author strengthens his work. Briefly, so as not to spoil a good thing, the story is that of Carol Kennicott, née Milford, her ups and

her downs in her quest for idealism. We find her at the beginning of the book, about to emerge from the chrysalis of a Middle Western college. During the pupa-stage she has, like all the rest of the college youth of America, soaked up theories. Chiefly, she believes that the world *can* be a beautiful place to live in, so why not? And so one day tossing aside a treatise on village improvement, she proclaims to herself, after the manner of a Savonrola, "That's what I'll do after college! I'll get my hands on one of these prairie towns and make it beautiful. Be an inspiration. Why should they have all the garden suburbs on Long Island? Nobody has done anything with the ugly towns here in the Northwest except hold revivals and build libraries to contain the Elsie books. I'll make 'em put in a village green, and darling cottages, and a quaint Main Street!"

And presently, after a short career as a library assistant in St. Paul, she meets and marries Doctor Will Kennicott, of Gopher Prairie, Minnesota, whence she goes with him to undertake her real mission as a "world beautifier."

As usual, the thing in practice is not what it looked in theory. And Carol becomes the groping, vaguely dissatisfied woman, beating the bars of her cage not rebelliously, but rather pleadingly. Meanwhile her husband remains the simple, stodgy, satisfied male he has always been, seeing no reason for his wife's complex view of things. The stirrings within her finally have their way with Carol, however, and she asserts her principles. But with the book's ending, after sundry roving, we find her restored to her family.

The actual story of "Main Street" is commonplace. But in its well-drawn and keen detail the book is unique and unsurpassed in present-day fiction. There is a faithful setting down of the doings of this average American family which mirrors many of us. As a picture of American family life, indeed, it stands alone. It is the log of the journey from day to day. Nowhere have we read dialogue more humanly, more naturally achieved. For entertaining quality, for real holding interest there is nowhere such a book as Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street." To the voice of the multitude we add our faint whimper, "A fine book!" H. L. L.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE, by Edith Wharton; D. Appleton & Co., New York.

WITH a sureness of touch, a keenness of observation, an intimacy of knowledge of the class of which she writes, Mrs. Wharton paints the picture of the paradoxical "Age of Innocence"—not in impressionistic, sketchy form, but with a thought to the high lights and shadows, the value and emphasis of every detail. The age that covered with a veneer of form, convention, reticence, and feigned blindness the ancient vices and frailties of human nature has been analyzed with a deftness which conceals the arts employed.

The moral question may be raised as to whether the relations between Newland Archer and the Countess Olenska should have been carried in the book to the point to which they are carried, but the justification is in the definitely arrived at conviction that convention may cloak, but it can never root out human passions. The failings of the flesh were the same in 1870 as they are to-day, but restraint soon intensifies desire, and in "The Age of Innocence" we see the seething mass of pent-up emotions through the thin exterior of the social shell.

The device of skipping thirty years in the telling of the tale, and bringing the final chapter up to the present day with its frankness and freedom from social convention, affords an illuminating contrast. That which would have shocked and overturned the institutions of the chronicled age is countenanced, nay, taken for granted in the present day. Perhaps the present system is wrong. Who can tell? Certainly it is vastly different.

Mrs. Wharton in "The Age of Innocence" paints a vivid picture of New York society in the seventies. The impression of many people and of much activity, without the confusion of too many characters is achieved. The limitations of the age which drove about in broughams and illuminated its drawing-rooms with gas light are consistently observed without any anachronisms.

Despite its charm, "The Age of Innocence" has that depressing note which we have come to expect in Mrs. Wharton's novels. The futility of human endeavor, the never-to-be-satisfied craving for the impossible, the frustrated hopes of life are here as in "The House of Mirth," "Ethan Frome," or "The Custom of the Country."

THE HOUSE OF LYNCH, by Leonard Merrick; E. P. Dutton & Co., New York.

LEONARD MERRICK is the chronicler of artists, and although we have grown fond of the carefree, light-hearted artist of Merrick's creation who gets into scrapes and out again, living always frugally on the expectation of plenty, we are not the less sympathetic toward the artist of more serious purpose who is the moving character in "The House of Lynch."

The narrative is based on the power of a compelling ideal in the life of the artist, Richard Keith. He is sufficiently courageous to decline money as an aid to achieving fame because to him it represents always the misery created by

its too frequent unscrupulous acquisition. That he risks the loss of his wife, the love of his child, and the success of his career shows the extent to which he is pledged to his convictions.

The development of Betty, who renounces her fortune in marrying Keith, from an inexperienced débutante, attuned only to the nonchalant ordering of *hors d'oeuvres*, soup, and fish for lunch, into a mother who lives on ten dollars a week and makes over the baby's clothes by way of making ends come in sight of one another—and all this just to prove herself worthy of her husband's devotion—is startling, but convincing.

Mr. Lynch, the founder of the house of Lynch, is a pathetic figure in spite of his power. Ability to make a for-

tune he has indubitably, but the power to hold the love of his family he lacks pitifully. A spendthrift son and a daughter who will accept none of his money bring him small comfort in his last years. His greatest attainment in life, wealth, fails to get him what he craves most sincerely.

Compared to the actual game, Merrick's conception of Wall Street and its concomitant operations is naïve and simple, but what matter, since he makes the point he sets out to.

Merrick of the more serious, moralizing mood is less charming perhaps than as the creator of the beloved, roving Tricotrin, but in "The House of Lynch" he once more proves his versatility and easy handling of whatsoever medium he works in.



LIFE

LIFE is not one thing, but so many things:

No blinding truth of grave immensity,

But just the things we love. Life is to me

A night of stars; the path the moonlight flings

Upon a placid lake; a swan that sings

With trembling pain of death that is to be;

And lotus leaves that beckon timorously

And lure me backward to forgotten Springs.

Life is a red rose on a field of snow;

A silver moth a-flutter in the night;

A sea of green; and lilies slim and white

That with the passing breezes wake and blow.

And when my heart grows weary overmuch,

Life is a face that smiles, a hand to touch.

HELEN FRAZEE-BOWER.



In Broadway Playhouses

By Dorothy Parker

First Thoughts on Second Nights

IF I thought for a moment that you would stand for it, I should start right off by saying, in full, round tones easily audible in the farthest corner of the room, that Jacob Ben-Ami, late of the Yiddish Theater and now of the Hopkins production of "Samson and Delilah," is a great actor. I am prevented from so doing by the fear that, if I did, you would leave this department deservedly flat, and turn hurriedly over to the advertising section to lose yourself in the account of how Victor Jones improved his memory in a single evening. Were it not for that, I should go even farther, if my nerve held out, and announce that Jacob Ben-Ami is one of the greatest actors on the stage to-day. And I should add to that statement, for the sake of the dramatic effect, the purely rhetorical question, "Now what do you think of that?"

But nobody knows better than you that this is no way to start. Enthusiasm at the very beginning would be really too thick. For that matter, it is very little better left until the last, or even insinuated into the middle. The thing to do with it is to inhibit it altogether; that's the way to treat it. Enthusiasm is one of the greatest dangers that menace American home life to-day, and is undoubtedly back of the Wall Street explosion, the Elwell case, and the feeling

of discontent among the working classes. And, aside from all that, once it gets into a play review, it does show up the author so.

In particular, the use of enthusiasm in connection with Ben-Ami is not according to the best usage. It is looked upon, indeed, as little short of nouveau. The thing to do is to tiptoe about, finger warningly on lip, glancing furtively to right and left, and muttering through clenched teeth, "Wait—wait and see."

That is the method so successfully adopted by the various deans of newspaper dramatic critics. Do any of them lose their heads sufficiently to concede that Ben-Ami isn't bad, as actors go these days? Echo answers, "I should say not."

Some of the bolder among them may commit themselves so far as to hint that he does fairly well in "Samson and Delilah," but they hasten to cover up their recklessness by adding that it is impossible to pass any judgment upon his future competence until he has been seen in "Hedda Gabler," "Hamlet," "The School for Scandal," "Peter Pan," and "Ladies' Night." Such is the opinion of the radical element.

The conservatives dismiss the whole affair by saying that it is hardly fair to expect them to make any comment upon Ben-Ami's performance in "Samson and

Delilah" until they have had opportunity to see him in "Ghosts," "Macbeth," "Ben-Hur," "Way Down East," and "The Merry Widow." They round out their critiques by implying, in considerably more than so many words, that they gravely doubt if Edwin Booth would have thought much of the methods of this newcomer.

In fact, the impression stamped upon a sensitive mind, after prolonged poring over their reviews, is that any one overheard calling Ben-Ami a good actor is liable to five years' imprisonment or twenty-five hundred dollars' fine, or probably both, while the penalty for calling him great is the same as that for manslaughter.

Well, if it is a criminal offense, the police patrol is due to back up before our front door at any minute. It is, of course, hardly practicable for us to announce that Jacob Ben-Ami would be great in any play in which his manager might choose to exploit him in the future. But one wonders just how that ever came to be the issue, anyway, and just why it is that the hoarier critics have worked themselves into such a state about his possible future rôles. To a moderately unprejudiced observer, the question seems to be not "What would Ben-Ami be like in a revival of 'The Two Orphans,' if any one should ever revive it?" but "How is Ben-Ami in 'Samson and Delilah?'" And to that, we can but reply, "Great!"

In appearance, Ben-Ami is remarkably like some one you have seen somewhere; the resemblance worries you all through the play. Finally, toward the end of the evening, you discover who it is, and sink back, satisfied. His face is curiously like Charlie Chaplin's.

"Samson and Delilah" gives him his first rôle in English; one had to keep reminding oneself of that, though, for save for an unconquerable "oi" sound in such words as "first" and "work," and the substitution of "d" for "th," his

seems like an experienced pronunciation. He is far easier to understand than a wide selection of native-born stars who have been playing in English, roughly speaking, all their careers. Yet his surprisingly good English cannot claim all the credit for this; it seems as if one could understand him if he were playing in Chinese. His words say much less than his movements, his gestures, his singularly mobile face.

Of his acting of the rôle of the half-mad poet, made wholly mad by the discovery of his wife's love for a blunt-witted merchant, it is difficult to speak and keep calm. Extravagant praise makes the poorest of reading; as soon as a writer begins to turn on the superlatives, his clients promptly drop off. There is nothing like an exclamation point to put a full stop to a reader's interest. So I have your own welfare at heart when I say merely that Ben-Ami's performance is that of an artist, and let it go at that. Doubtless, as the venerable reviewers affirm, his acting is all at variance with the old traditions; but that, in these biased eyes is no faint praise. Perhaps, as they say, he has still to prove himself and that, given a great play, he may be shown up by it to be but a mediocre actor; possibly he will, but the entire contents of this old homestead, from the family plate to one, slightly soiled, wire-haired terrier puppy, will be freely staked that will not.

It almost seems as if, in giving life to the dense and heavy "Samson and Delilah," Ben-Ami had already accomplished a far more difficult feat than those the critics have set for him to perform before they will acknowledge him. Undoubtedly, "Samson and Delilah" is a poor, stuffy, tiresome thing, when you stop to think it over. The thing is that you don't stop to think it over. All you can think about is Ben-Ami; if you think of the play at all while he is on the stage, it is only to rate it under the gen-

eral head of the most interesting dramas of the decade.

"Samson and Delilah" is translated from the Scandinavian of Sven Lange. What a blessing that word "Scandinavian" is when you can't for the life of you recall whether Mr. Lange was Danish or Swedish or Norwegian! "Scandinavian" lets you out so readily. It is just another of those plays which are forever being translated from the Scandinavian.

But no one who has seen it can ever have any but the kindest feelings for it, for it serves to bring Jacob Ben-Ami to our stage. Besides—if any "besides" is needed—it has Pauline Lord as its heroine. There is no actress who acts so painlessly as Miss Lord; you keep forgetting that she is acting at all, and you are apt to undervalue her performance because of its very naturalness. Her unfinished sentences, her nervous, aimless movements—real people speak and move about in just that way. Most extraordinary of all, she doesn't look like an actress. It is just as though a real woman, some one who might perfectly well live in the apartment across the hall, were up on the stage before you. Those who crave an evening of good, hard acting are inclined to feel somewhat cheated, save for her few moments of terror at the end of the play. Outside of that, they might just as well save their money and stay home and look at their wives. Miss Lord does not even appear in a complete repertory of Lucile gowns, in her rôle as the wife of the impoverished poet.

The heavy-witted home-wrecker is played by Robert Haines, who, again according to the deans, is pitifully miscast. This seems however, a bit rough on Mr. Haines. It is one of those rôles in which anybody would seem to be miscast. It is pleasant to be able to report that the piece has now been moved to the Thirty-ninth Street Theater from the Greenwich Village Theater, where

it opened and where every tense moment was gently smoothed over by the cheery sound of the subway trains rumbling away right underneath, as if to say that no matter what was happening on the stage, God was in His heaven and business was going on as usual.

Even those who condemn "Samson and Delilah" most sweepingly can scarcely help but feel that the lady whom I overheard on the way out was a shade harsh in her comment. "Well," she summed up, "I didn't hear one bright, witty saying in the whole thing." Undoubtedly she had the right on her side, but after all—

It seems too bad that she hadn't spent her evening and her price of admission up at the Garrick Theater, where the Theater Guild is producing Shaw's "Heartbreak House." For the first act and part of the second, she could have heard all the "bright, witty sayings" her little heart desired. But after that she might just as well have gone back to "Samson and Delilah."

We can display an impressively professional lack of enthusiasm about the new Shaw piece. After saying that the first act is delightful, that the play is cleverly staged, and that it is admirably acted by a cast including Effie Shannon, Lucile Watson—who seems especially designed by Nature to deliver Shaw's lines—Elizabeth Risdon, and Dudley Digges, there is nothing left to do about it, save to warn the intending visitor that he had better bring a good serviceable pair of ear muffs along with him when he goes to see it. For the last act contains the loudest air raid ever heard on the local stage. Also, the ear muffs will be handy to have around for use during the second act, so that the droning sound of the conversation going on upon the stage may be shut out, and a refreshing slumber enjoyed.

It may be that the present writer would have been able to work up more of a glow about the thing had she been

able to read into it the meanings which those about her so readily perceived. It was pretty to hear them, all over the theater, explaining the symbolism to each other. "Look, 'Heartbreak House' is Europe," they prattled, "and the burglar is Belgium, and the maid is the Near East. And the old sea captain, of course, represents Shaw himself." Some disagreed with this, claiming that Shaw himself was represented by the burglar, not the sea captain, and many conceded that there was a great deal to be said on both sides. All agreed, however, that at least one of the characters represented Shaw himself. There never yet was any one who attended a Shaw play who did not come away loudly announcing that one of its characters represented Shaw himself. No matter what else you may read into it, you must assume that to start with, or else nothing that you say counts.

Now it is not for this timid type-writer to say that these interpretations are wrong. In the first place, the present writer has ever been notoriously bad at that sort of thing. She cannot interpret the most elementary symbols in the drama; indeed, unless some one carefully explains to her that she is witnessing a symbolic play, it never occurs to her to take it at other than its face value. Allegories in the theater are a total loss to her; she has never been one to find sermons in Fred Stone's. And certainly the first act of "Heartbreak House" needs no symbolism to help it along. It is no doubt delightful if you can see that it really expresses conditions in post-war Europe, or whatever else you would like to have it represent, but it is assuredly just as delightful if you just accept it as meaning nothing in particular. Perhaps it would give you something to occupy your mind if, when things on the stage get too conversational, you could puzzle out the allegorical meanings. But that would only cut in on your pleasant drowsiness.

And after all, there is nothing like a couple of hours' relaxation and repose in a warm theater to set you up for the rest of the night.

And now about the month's domestic products. Naturally, the first to tell of is Amelie Rives' dramatization of "The Prince and the Pauper," at the Booth Theater. You know how refreshing it is to take up the morning paper, after dreary weeks of nothing to read about except building investigations and prohibition raids, and find, right there on the front page, a glowing account of a nice, sensational murder? The sap stirs again, and you feel that there is romance and adventure in life, after all. So it is, after a season of plays of middle-class dullness, rendered by actors of the repressed school, and plays of drowsy country towns roused to bustling business life by energetic transients, to come upon a play where everybody says "Prithee" and "Good, my liege," where rapiers flash and armor clanks, and the king's soldiers gallop up just as the noose is slipping into place about the hero's neck. You don't know, till you see "The Prince and the Pauper," how good a bit of swashbuckling seems for a change.

And it is such delightful swashbuckling, as done by William Faversham as *Miles Hendon*. After seeing him, you doubt if you will ever take much interest in a cutaway-coated, white-spatted hero again. The title rôles are played by Ruth Findley. If they must have a young woman to play a boy's part, one can never be too thankful that they chose a slim and appealing young woman, and not, as is usually the case, one of Susanna Cocrift's disciples; but one wonders why it must be a young woman at all. The play is set with all the requisite picturesqueness, and has a colorful and convincing bit in the playing of *Princess Elizabeth* by Clare Eames.

There is a little bit of a play going on

over at the Punch and Judy, so small that it is scarcely visible to the naked eye. It is called "Rollo's Wild Oat," and it is from the fluent pen of Clare Kummer; therefore, fragile though it is as to plot and construction, it contains many more bright lines than enliven many more substantial works. Miss Kummer's lines are not the kind that you quote after the preface, "Here's a good one that they get off in 'Rollo's Wild Oat.'" Their charm is difficult to analyze; it lies mainly, it seems, in their unexpectedness, and their calm. Maybe, too, they sound better than they have any right to, in this case, because they are said by Roland Young and Lotus Robb. They, even more than Miss Kummer, are responsible for making this gentlest and most unassuming of little comedies into a pleasantly amusing affair.

Another new theater has come into our lives. It is called, with a pretty feeling for the old traditions, the Apollo, and it is the property of the Selwyns, so it bears a strong family resemblance to their other handsome playhouses. The opening event is the musical comedy, "Jimmie," in which Frances White makes her debut as the star of something with a book to it. The book, unfortunately, casts its shadow over the whole enterprise. One had thought that all those jokes and situations were lived down long ago. Miss White not only contributes her specialties, but has taken up toe dancing—as far as we are concerned, though, no one need ever take up toe dancing—and is immeasurably more appealing than you thought she would be in the rôle of a little waif

eventfully restored to a rich father. There is some decidedly charming music, and there are some decidedly awful lyrics.

At the Central Theater, on a stage unfortunately small for the gorgeous Paul Poirer costumes, is "Afgar," brought over from England as a vehicle for the much-heralded Delysia. When you see her, in her green feather outfit, you don't think that they have heralded her half enough. And the curious thing is that she can sing, and has a marked gift for comedy, which the authors do nothing to help out. The management has had a few local jokes interpolated into the English book, just to give a touch of the home soil, and "soil" is putting it mildly. But it doesn't matter, after all; the important lines are Delysia's.

Oh, yes, there was another non-musical play I nearly forgot. "When We Are Young" is its name, and it jointly stars Henry Hull, George Marion, and Alma Tell. It is all about the fine lovable young Southern gentleman, who shows his chivalry by bullying his old negro servant, lying down with his feet higher than his head while addressing insulting witticisms to his aged uncle, and making a tremendous to-do about going to work. Then there is an orphaned girl, poor but of impeccable social position, in the same boarding house, who steals into his room to read his books, and finally there is the telegram saying that the rich aunt has died, and Marse Carey won't have to work any mo'. As you can see for yourself, "clean" isn't half the word for it. And neither is "terrible."

Don't Miss

THE BRIGHTENER

in the March Issue

A RIPPING MYSTERY NOVEL

By C. N. and A. M. WILLIAMSON

Talks With Ainslee's Readers

ONE of the foremost editors of the nineteenth century, Richard Watson Gilder, once made the observation that it was not necessary to eat a whole turkey to know whether it was fit to eat or not. His experience with short-story manuscripts, he said, had been the same. And if it's true of the editor, it's doubly true of the reader—who reads for diversion—that he need not go very far along in a tale to know whether it's "real stuff" or merely calculated to fill up space. And, after all, the holding quality of a tale is the supreme test of its worth as fiction. There's little fun or lasting pleasure in the reading of a tale that might as well be dropped at any juncture, and no loss or curiosity suffered. It's the tale that grips from start to finish, the one that from the beginning lures one on, that's worth the time it takes in the reading.

UNLESS you're the methodical kind of person who reads literally from cover to cover, each story as it is scheduled in the table of contents, you'll have a hard time deciding where to plunge into the March number and start reading, for each story begins well, carries on consistently, and ends uniquely.

The novelette we commend to your attention. It is called "The Brightener" and is by those masters of fiction—of mystery, particularly—C. N. and A. N. Williamson. Do you remember "The Lightning Conductor" or the more recent "The Second Latchkey?" If you remember the Williamsons by nothing else, you'll recall that they were the first writers to use the motor car in fiction. Singularly successful collaborators, Mr. and Mrs. Williamson's work has always been in great demand by the reading public, and interest in their books has been deepened by the recent untimely death of Mr. Williamson. There is, unfortunately, but little of their joint work still available. "The Brightener" is one of their best shorter mystery tales. "Brightening" is the interesting career undertaken by a charming lady of high family and low funds, and it is as absorbing a profession as it is unusual. But all this is merely incidental to the real tale, which turns on intrigue and the theft of jewels and something which comes very near to murder. Once you have embarked on the reading of "The Brightener" all else will for the nonce go by the board.

Peter Clark Macfarlane has written for the March AINSLEE's an arresting tale of love and pathos and humor. It's a great thing to be a nationally sought construction engineer, but in this case a certain woman demanded more in the man she was to marry than the ability to build bridges. Did she get it? And how? Read "At Four O'Clock," in the March issue.

DID you ever stroll up Fifth Avenue, on a bright Saturday afternoon, past myriad good-looking girls and prosperous, well-set-up men and feel a little sinking feeling because out of the host of them you knew not one? Barrett Lord did, and because he was an unusually gregarious animal, he quickly produced a remedy for his lonesomeness. For a tale that has real human feeling, plus plot, with bright spots throughout, read, in the March AINSLEE's, Rebecca Hooper Eastman's "The Lonely Mr. Lord." Paul Hervey Fox contributes a good tale of love and industry, with enough deception to provide interesting conflict. To build up the town which bore his name and to "put it on the map" had been Jason Ware's ambition. But he died before accomplishing it. To his daughter, Corinna, fell the task, then. Did she do it? We don't mind telling you she did. But somebody helped, and there were sundry vicissitudes before Ware achieved its geographic location.

In the March AINSLEE's, also, Arthur Crabb has one of his inimitable love tales, with a touch of golf, a touch of mystery.

Du Vernet Rabell contributes "The Lover at Large," a charming love story with a philanderer who turns out to be not one at all. Gene Markey has another Monty Sims tale on tap in the coming number, and, reading it, you'll be able to laugh away a toothache. The second part of Katharine Haviland Taylor's "The Family Tradition" appears in the March number also. Miss Taylor's work has a charm, a brilliance, which one finds too seldom in the shorter fiction of to-day. She is at her best, we think, setting down the doings of the Paret family. In the first installment Rita's engagement had been finally consummated. Well, there was more to come on that score. Finish the tale in the March AINSLEE's.

Other unique fiction by Valma Clark, Helen Duncan Queen, Anice Terhune, and Berta Ruck complete the March issue.

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Good-bye to Gray Hair!

Here's the way to stop it

This way is easy, quick and sure, and it works a transformation. You simply comb a clear, colorless liquid through your hair—in from 4 to 8 days the gray disappears and the natural color returns. This colorless liquid is the triumph of modern science, which has produced a true restorer.

Mary T. Goldman's Hair Color Restorer


We prove the truth of these statements with a trial bottle, sent free if you fill out and mail in the coupon. Full directions and a special application comb come with it. Try it on a single lock—then get a full sized bottle from your druggist or direct from us. Don't accept imitations.

Mary T. Goldman, 110 Goldman Bldg., St. Paul, Minn.

Please send me your FREE trial bottle of Mary T. Goldman's Hair Color Restorer with Special Comb. I am not obligating in any way by accepting this free offer.

The natural color of my hair is
 black..... jet black..... dark brown.....
 medium brown..... light brown.....

Name..... Street.....
 Town..... Co..... State.....



Deformities of the Back

Greatly benefited or entirely cured by the Philo Burt Method.

The 40,000 cases successfully treated in our experience of over nineteen years is absolute proof of this statement.


No matter how serious your deformity, no matter what treatments you have tried, think of the thousands of sufferers this method has made well and happy. We will prove the value of the Philo Burt Method in your own case.

The Philo Burt Appliance on 30 Days' Trial

Since you run no risk there is no reason why you should not accept our offer at once. The photographs here show how light, cool, elastic and easily adjustable the Philo Burt Appliance is—how different from the old torturing plaster, leather or steel jackets. To weakened or deformed spines it brings almost immediate relief even in the most serious cases. You owe it to yourself to investigate it thoroughly. The price is within reach of all.

Send for our Free Book today and describe the nature and condition of your trouble as fully as possible so we can give you definite information.

**PHILO BURT CO.
105-2044 Fellows Temple - Jamestown, N. Y.**



Pick the Job You Want

Explain how I can qualify for positions checked:

... Architect \$5,000 to \$15,000	... Lawyer \$5,000 to \$15,000
... Building Contractor \$5,000 to \$10,000	... Mechanical Engineer \$4,000 to \$15,000
... Automobile Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000	... Ship Superintendent \$3,000 to \$7,000
... Automobile Repairman \$2,500 to \$4,000	... Employment Manager \$4,000 to \$10,000
... Civil Engineer \$5,000 to \$15,000	... Steam Engineer \$2,000 to \$8,000
... Structural Engineer \$5,000 to \$10,000	... Foreman's Course \$2,000 to \$4,000
... Business Manager \$5,000 to \$15,000	... Photoplay Writer \$2,000 to \$10,000
... Cer. Pub. Accountant \$7,500 to \$15,000	... Sanitary Engineer \$2,500 to \$5,000
... Accountant and Auditor \$2,500 to \$7,000	... Telephone Engineer \$2,500 to \$5,000
... Draftsman and Designer \$2,500 to \$4,000	... Telegraph Engineer \$2,500 to \$5,000
... Electrical Engineer \$4,000 to \$10,000	... High School Graduate in Two Years
... General Education in one year	... Fire Insurance Expert \$5,000 to \$15,000

Name..... Address.....

You Want More Money

You want one of the big jobs listed above. You want promotion and constantly increasing salary. You want your position to be permanent. You say "Of course I do, but how?" There is no secret formula for success. You will be surprised how easy it is to get ahead, once you are shown how. Check the job you want, send us the coupon and we will explain, without obligation to you, how to get the job you want.

DEPT. C-2192

**AMERICAN SCHOOL of CORRESPONDENCE
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WORK, in homes or factory, means dust.

Luden's make work easier. Clear nose and throat.



Always good for coughs and colds—pure menthol and eleven other ingredients make them so.

WM. H. LUDEN
in Reading, Pa. Since 1881



(14)

"DON'T SHOUT"



"I can hear you with the MORLEY PHONE." It is invisible, weightless, comfortable, inexpensive. No metal, wires nor rubber. Can be used by anyone, young or old. The Morley Phone for the

DEAF

is to the ears what glasses are to the eyes. Write for Free Booklet containing testimonials of users all over the country. It describes causes of deafness; tells how and why the MORLEY PHONE affords relief. Over one hundred thousand sold.

THE MORLEY CO., Dept. 758, 26 S. 15 St., Phila.

Cuticura Soap Will Help You Clear Your Skin

Soap, Ointment, Talcum, &c. everywhere. Samples free of Cuticura Laboratories, Dept. D, Malden, Mass.

DEAFNESS IS MISERY



I know because I was Deaf and had Head Noises for over 30 years. My invisible Antiseptic Ear Drums restored my hearing and stopped Head Noises, and will do it for you. They are Tiny Megaphones. Cannot be seen when worn. Effective when Deafness is caused by Catarrh or by Perforated, Partially or Wholly Destroyed Natural Drums. Easy to put in, easy to take out. Are "Unseen Comforts." Inexpensive. Write for Booklet and my sworn statement of how I recovered my hearing.

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Wrist Watches
See Catalog for all the latest styles. Big bargain on credit terms as low as
\$2.50
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Send for Free Loftis Catalog
There are 128 illustrated pages of Diamonds, Watches, Jewelry, etc. Whatever you select will be sent, all charges paid. You see and examine the article right in your own hands. If satisfied pay one-fifth purchase price and keep it; balance in 8 equal monthly payments. Splendid bargains in watches on credit terms as low as \$2.50 a Month.

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LOFTIS BROS. & CO., The National Credit Jewelers
Stores in Leading Cities. Dept. K222 100 N. STATE ST., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

For elegance and artistic beauty, our Diamond Rings are unsurpassed

Please mention this magazine when answering advertisements

This Executive Rose From A Clerkship



Five years ago he was a subordinate. Today he is dictating policies in a large corporation. Some of his former mates say it was luck—others talk of favoritism—but the records of LaSalle Extension University show it was *training* which put this man into an officership. He saw that *training* was all he needed to pass from the high stool in the outer office to the big mahogany desk in the private room. He realized that the only men who are "held down" are the ones who do not make themselves worth more.

He Signed and Mailed a LaSalle Coupon

This man got his start by sending a coupon like the one below. It brought him complete information about the LaSalle plan of training under experts during spare time—a plan which organizes and simplifies the knowledge and experience of hundreds of the country's best business authorities. Along with this information came evidence—copies of hundreds of letters—from men who also were formerly in subordinate positions but who had been advanced thru LaSalle training. He enrolled, got this training and quickly won promotion.

This Training for Every Ambitious Man

LaSalle experts have helped more than 250,000 ambitious men to get the specialized knowledge

which commands the high salaries. Every year more than 50,000 new members enroll. And yet "Big Business" is constantly complaining of the scarcity of men qualified for executive positions.

LaSalle gives every man the chance to train for advancement. It enrolls young fellows just beginning their career. It gives a new impetus to the man already started.

What the LaSalle Extension Method Means

In your leisure time at home you get the benefit of the combined knowledge of noted business authorities in the kind of work for which you wish to qualify.

Every problem, lecture, lesson text and special article you receive is based upon the actual experience of an authority pre-eminent in that particular subject. Every point is made clear and easy to understand. Any person of average ability and education can take up and successfully follow a LaSalle course in specialized business training.

Records Made by LaSalle Trained Men

From 50 to 2,000 or more students and graduates can be found with many of the largest corporations such as Standard Oil Co., Pennsylvania System, Ford Motor Co., International Harvester Co., U. S. Steel, Swift & Co., etc., while many other important business organizations have from 50 to 100 or more occupying positions of responsibility.

Which Course Interests You?

Send the coupon. Mark it to indicate the course which particularly interests you and you will receive full information about the LaSalle Problem Method of training, the modest cost and our easy terms. We will also send free our famous book, "Ten Years' Promotion in One," a book that has been an inspiration to more than 250,000 ambitious men. Send for your copy now.

Which course shall we tell you about?

LASALLE EXTENSION UNIVERSITY

The Largest Business Training Institution in the World

Dept. 265-R

Chicago, Ill.

Please send me catalog and full information regarding the course and service I have marked with an X below. Also a copy of your book, "Ten Years' Promotion in One," all without obligation to me.

☐ **HIGHER ACCOUNTANCY:**
Training for positions as Auditor, Comptroller, Public Accountant, Cost Accountant, etc.

☐ **LAW:**
Training for Bar; LL.B. Degree. **COMMERCIAL LAW:**
Reading, Reference and Consultation Service for Business Men.

☐ **EXPERT BOOKKEEPING:**
Training for position of Head Bookkeeper.

☐ **BANKING AND FINANCE:**
Training for executive positions in Banks and Financial Institutions.

☐ **PERSONNEL & EMPLOYMENT MANAGEMENT:**
Training for Employers, Employment Managers, Executives, Industrial Engineers.

☐ **MODERN FOREMANSHIP:**
Training in the direction and handling of industrial forces—for Foremen, Sub-Foremen, Contractors, Shop Superintendents, etc.

☐ **INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT:**
Training for Production Managers, Department Heads, and all those desiring training in the 48 factors of efficiency.

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Training for Official, Managerial, Sales and Executive Positions.

☐ **BUSINESS LETTER WRITING:**
Training for positions as Correspondent, Mail Sales Director, and executive letter-writing positions.

☐ **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT—FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC:**
Training for positions as Railroad and Industrial Traffic Manager, etc.

☐ **BUSINESS ENGLISH:**
Training for Business Correspondents and Copy Writers.



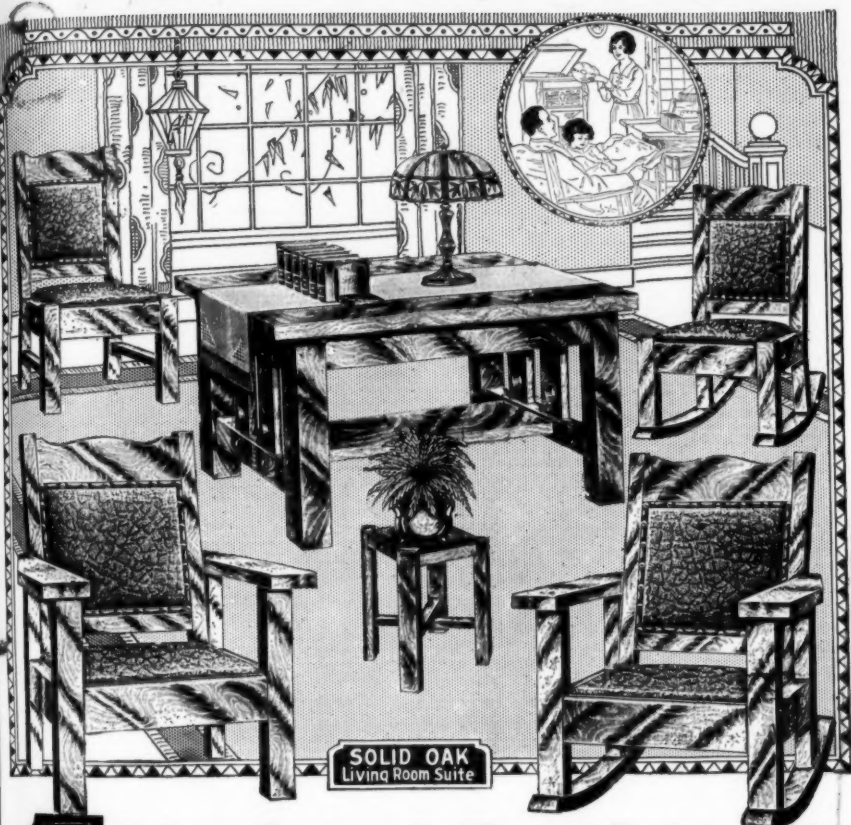
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Preparation for State Board and Institute Examinations.

☐ **COMMERCIAL SPANISH:**
Training for position as Foreign Correspondent with Spanish-speaking countries.

Name _____ Present Position _____ Address _____

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**SOLID OAK
Living Room Suite**

Brings Hartman's Elegant 7-piece Suite

Richly Upholstered Backs and Seats, Beautiful New Design

Without doubt the greatest bargain in Mission furniture. Sent for only \$1 down and on 30 days free trial. If not satisfied, send it back and we will refund the \$1 and pay freight both ways. If you keep it, pay balance, only \$3.00 monthly—over a year to pay.

Take Over a Full Year to Pay

This splendid suite consists of large Arm Rocker, Arm Chair, Sewing Rocker, Side Chair, Library Table, Tabourette and Book Blocks—all beautifully finished, fumed in a rich shade of brown, neatly waxed. Very massive and well braced—very durable. Rocker and chairs seats and backs are richly upholstered in imitation Spanish brown leather, well padded for comfort. Reams of backs are also upholstered with same material as front. Chairs and table are set on "domes of alliance." Rocker and Arm Chair about 36 inches high and have seats 19x19 in. Backs 22 in. from seat. Sewing Rocker and Side Chair about 34 in. high, seats 16x16 in., back 21 in. from seat.

Upholstered Seats and Backs

Extra Large Table—24 x 36 Library Table, stands 30 inches high; legs 2 inches square. Faneled ends and roomy bookshelf. Tabourette top, 16x16 inches. Height 16 inches. Book Blocks large and heavy. Shipped without delay (fully boxed, "knocked down" to save freight) from Chicago warehouse or factory in Indiana. Shipping weight about 180 pounds.

Order No. 110CMA15. Price \$39.95. Pay only \$1 down. Balance \$3.00 monthly.

FREE Bargain Catalog The great free 432 page Catalog offers you choicest styles and amazing bargains in furniture, rugs, linoleum, stoves, watches, silverware, dishes, washing machines, sewing machines, aluminum ware, phonographs, gas engines and cream separators, etc.—all on our easy monthly payment terms. 30 days' trial. Post card or letter brings it by return mail.

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HARTMAN Furniture & Carpet Co.
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Enclosed find \$1. Send the 7-Piece Living Room Suite No. 110CMA15 as described. I am to have 30 days' trial. If not satisfied will ship it back and you will refund my \$1 and pay freight both ways. If I keep it, I will pay \$3.00 per month until the price, \$39.95, is paid.

Name.....
Address.....
R. F. D..... Box No.....
Town..... State.....

COLGATE'S

RIBBON DENTAL CREAM

REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.



*She has no need of subtle arts
To win attention or beguile;
The beauty of her teeth imparts
A charm that lingers in her smile.*

Chemicals have no sense

WITHOUT expert direction they may do more harm than good. They don't know where to stop. A dentifrice that is strongly drugged to dissolve deposits upon your teeth may irritate the gums or injure the delicate mouth tissues.

Colgate's Ribbon Dental Cream cleans the teeth *safely* and *thoroughly* without depending upon chemical action. Hard or discoloring deposits should be removed by your dentist.

There is no harsh grit in Colgate's; the flavor is so delicious that children use it without urging.

COLGATE & CO. Est. 1806 NEW YORK



The name "COLGATE" on toilet articles conveys the word "Sterling" in its

